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THE CHURCH CATECHISM

THE CHRISTIAN'S MANUAL

BY THE REV.
W. C. E. NEWBOLT, M.A.
Canon and Chancellor of S. Paul's

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TO THE REVERED MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER

FROM WHOSE LIPS I LEARNED THE CATECHISM AS A CHILD

THE PRECEPTS OF WHICH AS A MAN

I CHERISH

WITH EVER-INCREASING

VENERATION

EDITORS' PREFACE

The object of the Oxford Library of Practical Theology is to supply some carefully considered teaching on matters of Religion to that large body of devout laymen, who desire instruction, but are not attracted by the learned treatises which appeal to the theologian. One of the needs of the time would seem to be, to translate the solid theological learning, of which there is no lack, into the vernacular of every-day practical religion; and while steering a course between what is called plain teaching on the one hand and erudition on the other, to supply some sound and readable instruction to those who require it, on the subjects included under the common title 'The Christian Religion,' that they may be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.

The Editors, while not holding themselves precluded from suggesting criticisms, have regarded their proper task as that of editing, and accordingly they have not interfered with the responsibility of each writer for his treatment of his own subject.

W. C. E. N.
D. S.

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INTRODUCTORY

INTRODUCTORY

Few thinking men can contemplate unmoved the magnificent pile of ecclesiastical buildings, which crowns the hill at Ely, and rising above the vast flats of the Fens, seems to gaze out solemnly upon the mystery of their blue distances. The chequered history of England is written on these walls, and the storms which have passed over the Church have left on them dark scars and deep furrows. Character in them, as in the life of a human being, is evolved out of failure, recovery, restoration, and new beginnings.

But to those who know where to seek for it, there is one record of peculiar significance, which bears on the subject of these pages. In the gallery adjoining the western wing of the Bishop's Palace, in the panels of a bay-window, bearing the arms of Bishop Goodrich, who occupied the see during the crisis of the Reformation, is carved 'the Duty towards God' on the left, and 'the Duty towards our neighbour' on the right, indicating perhaps the authorship of this particular part of the Church Catechism; but speaking to us certainly with a voice out of those troublous times of one more effort made to adjust faith to practice, and to reconcile the conflict, so congenial to our fallen nature, between orthodoxy in creed and integrity of life, and to take up the challenge of the Epistle of S. James: 'Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.'[1]

For a glance at the Book of Common Prayer will show how remarkable is the position occupied in its

[1] S. James ii. 18.

pages by the Church Catechism. Amidst structural services, offices, and Liturgy, with their rubrics and explanatory notes, it stands as an indication of the spiritual mood in which he who uses the book should approach the worship of Almighty God. It is, further, an endeavour to enlist the intelligence as well as the spiritual apprehension of the worshipper, so that he may pray with the spirit, and pray with the understanding also, and that he may sing with the spirit, and sing with the understanding also. The Catechism appears to occupy the position which it does, in obedience to the same principle which has given us the long exhortations in the various parts of the book, here however carried much further into the inmost recesses of the Faith. Every child must be taught the relation in which he stands to the God Whom he worships: Who He is in His Being and Nature, how He is to be approached, and what He requires as His own right, and what He expects from us as regards our fellowmen, and finally what is the underlying deep significance, in the region of grace, of the outward ceremonies and ecclesiastical terms which are here imposed on the devout Churchman.

A short explanation of the history of the Catechism, where it stood first in the Prayer Book, when it was produced, how it has been amplified, and who were its probable authors, has already appeared in a previous volume of this series, to which we must refer our readers.[1] It is only necessary now to attempt to justify this fuller treatment of that which was originally a manual for children about to be confirmed, as a working compendium of rules of faith and practice for grown-up men.

It surely will not be maintained that the Catechism is one of the childish things to be put away when one becomes a man; rather we believe that those who compiled it gathered up into brief, pregnant, and serviceable sentences, so much of the principles of religion as

[1] Pullan, *History of the Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 207-8.

would form the basis of a man's spiritual life, when he had passed out of the region of childhood into the hard facts of practical experience. The Church here trains up the child in the way he should go, in the express earnest hope that when he is old he will not depart from it. And it will be found, that in many cases at all events it is true, that the inner meaning underlying these questions and answers has only been understood when life has given its fuller teaching, and experience its deeper explanation. And so we find, that, although from time to time there has been a desire to simplify the teaching of the Catechism on the one hand, and enlarge its scope on the other, hitherto it has remained unchanged since Overall added the section on Sacraments in 1604. A manual which is to survive childhood must needs be couched in solid terms, and words which are to be committed to memory will of necessity be brief.

The object of these chapters is to show the excellent grounding in faith and practice which he has received who has been trained in the teaching of the Church Catechism; and how it may be to us a point of departure for graver lessons than those which appear on the surface; while it supplies a valuable scheme and arrangement under which to group those vital truths of religion which bear upon our life.

And so Archbishop Benson has said in his address to his Diocesan Conference in 1891: 'I believe that there never has been in the hands of any Church any manual representing the doctrines, the true spirit of the Bible, to compare with the Catechism of the Church of England.'[1]

In taking the Church Catechism as a sufficient manual of instruction for the Churchman of to-day, we lay ourselves open to objections from many quarters.

A book of instruction which appears in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can hardly be adapted to the requirements of the twentieth, it must needs amplify or

[1] Quoted in Robinson, *Church Catechism Explained.*

exaggerate much which, if of importance then, has since become exploded and obsolete. It must needs be out of touch with modern methods, and irresponsive to the wants and difficulties which have been created by the extraordinary developments of modern life; further, however suspiciously we may view the term, there is a legitimate development in the life of the Church, and no one can deny that what has been called the Reformation settlement is much nearer settlement as a system in the Church of England, than it was when the Catechism appeared, or in the turbulent times which have fallen on the Church at subsequent epochs of her career. Certainly there is an old-world ring about the phrases so familiar to us. He who penned the answers to these questions, and planned the scheme on which the questions are based, had no doubt as to the importance of definite dogmatic Faith. He had no thoughts of a conscience clause drawn as a bar across the entrance to elementary truth. He had no idea of a system of education which should proceed in absolute ignorance of God's revealed Word, or pass it through the close meshes of the sieve of prejudice, until only a thin residuum survived barely reducible to the contents of one of the answers here put before the Christian child. It is true that for the last thirty-two years the Church Catechism has had to bear the brunt of the assault on what is called denominational religion; and the spirit of the age has been favourable to the assault. The Catechism has been attacked in the schools, the Bible in the critical workshops, the Church on controversial platforms. Any positive statement because it is positive, any definite system because it is definite, seems to act as an irritant, and to challenge immediate attack. 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul,' is a more popular formula than these propositions which speak of 'a state of salvation,' of a definite faith, of sacraments necessary to salvation, and of duties to God, as well as duties to man. We have

been told again and again that children do not understand dogmatic distinctions, and so the Fatherhood of God is taught them with such dilution as the spirit of the age demands, and the child must be left to learn as best he may about the Saviour, and be extremely careful to avoid superstition, if he goes on to learn of God the Sanctifier.

Thirty-two years is a long enough period by which to test the probable trend of a widespread, well-developed system of education, which represents the exact opposite to the principles enunciated in the Church Catechism, and no one can say that the outlook is reassuring. Here are two admissions side by side made by one entirely in sympathy with modern methods, and in a book where 'the voluntary school system' is unsparingly denounced. 'Upon these city generations there has operated the now widely spread influence of thirty years of elementary school teaching. The result is a *mental* change; each individual has been endowed with the power of reading, and a certain dim and cloudy capacity for apprehending what he reads. Hence the vogue of the new sensational press, with its enormous circulation and baneful influence; the perpetual demand for fiercer excitement . . . from his papers.'[1] This is the one statement, the other follows later on: 'Virtually it may be said the only forces operating among the new city race, the only attempts at spiritual or collective effort with which any dweller in it is ever likely to come into contact, are the forces of the older creeds of Christianity.'[2] The writer goes on to speak of them as developing and broadening, but still to him 'they offer the only adequate machinery for the warfare against the degenerating influences of modern town life.' This would seem to be profoundly true, and to offer the only hope for realising modern ideals, which hitherto have assumed it to be possible to do our duty towards our neighbour, before we know

[1] *The Church and the Empire*, p. 8. [2] *Ibid.* p. 34.

our duty towards God, and that God is what we conceive that He might possibly be, not what Revelation has shown that He is.

The simple strength of the principles embodied in the Catechism stands out more firmly than ever from the wreckage of the flimsy buildings which were erected to hide it. And the more these principles are studied the more they will be seen to represent not an attenuated *residuum* of truth, to which no one has any objection, but a serviceable *minimum* such as a child may learn, and a busy man remember, of facts in the spiritual world as true now as when they were written, and which always must be true, because they are based on elementary principles and historical evidence. The existence and nature of God as He has been pleased to declare it either in natural or revealed religion, is susceptible of no change. Our right relation to this truth is of constant and vital importance, it must regulate our conduct, and act as a restraint on the one hand and an encouragement on the other. What God has done and is doing for us, is as important for us to know, as what we are doing for Him. Here is no region where we should expect to find change. God loves us, and always has loved and always will love us, as certainly as the sun shines in the heaven above. Sin ruins, the devil kills, and the world corrupts, with the same undeviating regularity as that with which fire burns, or water drowns, or poison kills.

Everything which God has said is of extreme importance for us to know and act upon, more especially such things as He has emphasised as necessary. And He Who knew what was best for man, because He was Man, and knew what was in man, gave us the Catholic Church. And here is a manual instructing every child as to what he will find in the Church as he passes through life, and recalling every man to the true principles by which he is to guide his course through its many difficulties.

If there is a tendency to regulate modern life on the principle that 'what a person is, is of more importance in God's sight than what particular religious *formulæ* of belief he affirms or denies,' the principle, on the other hand, which runs through the Catechism is rather this, 'what a man is in God's sight depends on the particular religious formulæ of belief he affirms or denies.' Religion is not a department of a man's life which lies on the outside of it, but a regulating principle which governs the whole, and right practice is of necessity the outcome of a right faith which governs that practice: 'a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit,' and a man's life depends in the very last degree on what he believes, as is stated in its most extreme form in the Athanasian Creed, viz. that a right faith is necessary to salvation, which does not mean that we shall have to pass an examination in theology as a preliminary to entering heaven, but that the way of life can only be trodden in safety by those who know its conditions, and that Horeb, the Mount of God, is a place too distant, and a goal too arduous, for those who know nothing of the meat in whose strength they must undertake the journey otherwise too great for them.

It is in this spirit that the child is taught the dogmatic truths of the Catechism, and returns to them again and again when he is older, to assure himself that he is in the right path, by the sight of the familiar beacons of the Faith, the protecting hedge of the moral law, and the river of grace which runs beside the path. It is possible that two classes of readers may consult these pages: those who are put in charge with children and are earnestly anxious to impart to them sound principles as to the way of life; and those who desire to test the working value of principles long since committed to memory, and now challenged by the newer methods of the day, and the changing fashions which affect religion as well as other things. As to the first, they will not find, except it may be

incidentally, any explanatory or historical treatment of the text: this has been done already in many simple and accessible books of instruction. They will find rather the exposition of certain principles which form the basis of such instruction: the importance of the individual, the power of influence, the life of principle, the influence of conscience, the importance of faith, the conception of duty, and the *rationale* and power of sacraments. While at the same time those who are seeking for themselves to deepen their hold on religion and religious truth will see the importance of a firm hold of first principles in faith and conduct, as the best safeguard of that progress which means to advance in the way of truth, and of that liberty which means a freedom to do right.

It is now more than fifty years since a book was brought out on similar lines by Mr. Isaac Williams in the series of 'Plain Sermons by contributors to *Tracts for the Times*.' The Catechism has not altered since then, neither have the great truths altered to which the learner is there directed, but the conditions of life are changed considerably, and its perplexities and difficulties multiplied. Nothing is more wonderful in Christianity than its applicability to the shifting circumstances of an ever-changing world, and to the various types of humanity which come under its sway. So it will be found with this Catechism, which embodies its precepts, that while suitable for a child it appeals to the grown-up man, while drawn up in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it has a clear message also to the twentieth, and that complex life in cities as well as the quiet life in the country are alike calmer and fuller if based on an intelligent appreciation of these elementary truths, which begin with the Christian name of the individual and end with 'charity to all men,' as the Creed also begins with 'I' and loses itself in 'the Catholic Church' and 'the Communion of Saints' in that life which is everlasting.

PART I

Question. What is your Name?

Answer. N or M.

Question. Who gave you the Name?

Answer. My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism: wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

Question. What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then for you?

Answer. They did promise and vow three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. And thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.

Question. Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do, as they have promised for thee?

Answer. Yes, verily; and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end.

CHAPTER I

THE INDIVIDUAL

'And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.'

I said, M. de Saint Antoine est beau-père de M. le duc de Cazes, n'est-ce pas? Non monsieur, said Talleyrand, l'on disait il y a douze ans, que M. de Saint Antoine était beau-père de M. de Cazes: l'on dit maintenant que M. de Cazes est gendre de M. de Saint Antoine.

The familiarity of familiar things is the chief obstacle to our bestowing any serious thought upon them. Now and then, for instance, a specialist arises who shows us the mysteries and possibilities of light or the wondrous properties of air. But the majority of men are quite contented to believe that there always have been light and air, and that there is nothing more to be said about them. So with such a familiar thing as a man's name, few stop to think of the possibility of any underlying mystery being attached to it, or of any important teaching belonging to it, and would be disposed to compare unfavourably the abrupt and prosaic opening of the Church Catechism with others which seem to be more dignified and profound. 'What is your Name?' This seemed to be the first and all-important question to be asked of and answered by children, in the estimation of those who compiled this manual of instruction. Not surely in itself, that is, from the fact of a child possessing this or that name, but inferentially from the fact of his having a name at

all, as distinct from a number or other subdivision of a family.

That this is no trick of fancy nor forced explanation to account for a weak feature, may be seen in several directions. First, in the obvious importance attached to names in Holy Scripture; secondly, in the very great care and thought which is still in some cases bestowed in the giving of them, coupled of course with absolute indifference in others; and thirdly, in the vital importance of the underlying truths which are thereby symbolised, which act and react upon the character of those that think.

I

The importance attached to names in Holy Scripture is so patent as hardly to need demonstration: but it may be useful to try and tabulate or classify the usages respecting them. First, we may distinguish generally a tendency to emphasise the significance of individual names, and to point to a message which lies hid in them, to a revelation which they are able to give. Any one who has investigated not only the names of people but the names of things in a good dictionary will know what a fascinating and instructive study it is, as he finds that we are surrounded with eloquent and appealing symbols, not with arbitrary signs for mere convenience. Holy Scripture draws attention to this, and shows us at times how the names themselves came to be, and how their significance expanded itself. The most striking example of this is the Name of God, which is appealed to again and again as a matter of the utmost solemnity and of the most extreme importance, a name given by God Almighty to Himself in stages of progressive revelation, each stage significant, each appealing to men to recognise the character and claims of

Him Whom they invoked, and clothing the great mystery of the Godhead in the ideas which underlie the expression of Almightiness, simple existence, Fatherhood, Sonship, and Spirit.

And so throughout the pages of Holy Scripture we are directed by the interpreting Spirit not to forget the significance of names. Ichabod, the child of the unhappy Phineas's wife, is a living witness to a forfeited glory, and to the causes which brought it about.[1] Nabal is the speaking embodiment of a fool;[2] the pool of Siloam, whither the blind man goes at the command of Christ, is 'by interpretation, Sent.'[3] While Zacharias 'the remembrancer of God,' Elizabeth 'the oath of God,' and John 'the favour of God,' are all obviously adapted to the memorable incidents in which they appear at the threshold of the Gospel.[4] The fact of this underlying significance is only what we should expect in a world which seems to be hung with diagrams, and vocal with sermons, and resounding with warnings. But the appeal to their significance shows us how liable we are to forget the manifold appeals of God under the stupefying influence of familiarity or of repeated impressions. The parable of the Sower, the lesson from the lilies and the ravens, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz the child of Isaiah,[5] and Jezreel the child of Hosea,[6] are examples of the same kind of living appeal which God has made and still makes to the heart of His people through the imagination, in a world where nothing is wasted and everything is significant.

Closely connected with this, and yet with a more personal bearing on the individual, we have the examples of names given to men, either as a prophecy of some latent power yet to be developed, or as a title commemorative of some achievement won, or of a good

[1] 1 Sam. iv. 21. [2] 1 Sam. xxv. 25. [3] S. John ix. 7.
[4] S. Luke i. 5, 13. [5] Isa. viii. 3. [6] Hos. i. 4.

quality discovered in the character. So with reverence it may be said that the Holy Name of Jesus, twice insisted on by supernatural intervention before the sacred virgin birth, was a prophecy and an indication of the objects to be fulfilled in the life of the Incarnate God. So Cephas fixed indelibly upon the apostle the strong character to be carved out of his yielding and vacillating nature. So Boanerges marked the existence of strong capacities to be used or misused by those who possessed them. So the apostles stamped the depth of their affection on Barnabas, and Paul marked out the new life which lay before Saul. And it is only a variation of this usage to notice how, especially in the Old Testament, names were changed, such as Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, Jacob to Israel, as a sign of certain crises of character, or of covenanted relations which God then entered into with those that bore them.

And this giving of names is not confined to individuals, it is in some cases associated in very deep significance with cities or even a whole people. 'Take a good heart, O Jerusalem,' says Baruch, 'for He that gave thee that name will comfort thee.'[1] Or again of Zion Isaiah says, 'Thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.'[2] Or more remarkably still, 'Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.'[3] While of Christians, beside the notice of the first use of that name at Antioch,[4] we read, that they shall have the name of God and of Christ written upon them.[5]

In reviewing these few instances, at least we may say that God has used names in connection with

[1] Baruch iv. 30. [2] Isa. i. 26. [3] Isa. lxii. 4.
[4] Acts xi. 26. [5] Rev. iii. 12.

places, peoples, things, and persons as symbols and indications of very special relations which He had towards them, that He designed them to act through the imagination upon the heart, that in His hands they became prophecies and warnings, acting as a stimulant or deterrent; and further, that He knew how to reach the heart and stir the conscience to quicken love or kindle regret by the sympathetic chords which resounded in a man's personal name. 'Mary,' the sound of her own name roused the Magdalene to a quickened apprehension of heavenly things, and to a recognition of His Risen Presence, Who alone could awaken such memories, and kindle such ardent faith.[1] 'Thomas,' the sound of his own name, once more, opened up to the apostle the gloom of his overshadowed life, and the misery of his halting faith.[2] 'Simon, son of Jonas,' was a sound which sent the rock apostle back on himself to a time when as yet the light of Christ's countenance had not risen on his life;[3] while 'Saul, Saul' is the first articulate sound which burst upon the future apostle lying blinded and dazed in the throes of his conversion on the Damascus road.[4]

There are said to be savages who look upon the telegraph wires which stretch across their country, in communication with European civilisation, only as so much wire from which they may surreptitiously filch material for arrow-heads—he is scarcely more intelligent who despises the simplicity of simple things, or supposes it to be impossible that God can use common names, the ordinary designation of common life, as means of conveying His messages and uttering His warnings.

And there is one other indication yet in Holy Scripture, which if it be only an indication, should still be noted by any one who wishes to study fully the

[1] S. John xx. 16.
[2] S. John xx. 29.
[3] S. John xxi. 15.
[4] Acts ix. 4.

subject. In two remarkable instances, at least, in the New Testament, a conspicuous failure in life is signalised by the absence of a distinguishing name in him who thus failed to answer to the end for which he was created. The rich man in the parable is nameless, where the name of Lazarus, the beggar, is familiar to every Christian child.[1] And the young man who feared to lose his riches and position, and so remained deaf to the call of Christ, is known only as one of those who have 'made the great refusal.' His riches have gone, they have perished with him, and in the gospel which records his history he is nameless.[2]

II

If such be some of the indications in Holy Scripture, which seem to justify the position of the first question and answer in the Church Catechism, it will be found that, on investigation, the customs and habits which govern human experience yield a similar result.

It is easy, of course, to point to the large number of frivolous and meaningless names all around us, chosen either because the parents lacked imagination, or as mere labels, with as little moral significance as if the children were numbered; or apparently dug out of the quarry of the last novel or newspaper romance. But even here we cannot altogether escape from some sort of significance. The careless naming indicates the careless parent, the careless parent brings into more solemn relief the real responsibilities and duties laid upon those who found a family. It cannot fail to strike any thinking man, that any idea of marriage which looks upon children only as accidents or hindrances incident to that estate; which neither looks backwards into a past however near, nor forwards into a future however immediate,

[1] S. Luke xvi. 19. [2] S. Mark x. 17.

must have failed to grasp the true significance and dignity of that mysterious union. A builder who puts in his stones regardless of the plan which has hitherto governed the construction of the building, and has no idea of 'a consecutive art,' stands self-condemned as a constructor; he is a workman who sooner or later must needs be ashamed. So, as the wrongness of wrong work, when we see it, bears witness to the inherent rightness of that which is right, the obvious unfitness of that which throws any indignity on family life bears indirect witness to the beauty and congruity of a right conception of its meaning. But a little investigation of the principles which would seem to govern the naming of children would, we are confident, produce a different result. It would open up visions of much that is pathetic, much that is dignified, sometimes of much that is fantastic; but in a very large number of cases the result would be deeply significant, and show how Holy Scripture is not only the guide to human action, but is also a true mirror of the interests and motives which govern the habits of mankind.

Who has not paused to notice in a suburban district, or when walking among the villas of a watering-place, the strange and incongruous names which distinguish the houses one from another in preference to street or number designation? Here is the name of a mountain in Scotland, or the title of a famous general, here is the name of some quiet country town or village transplanted into new surroundings, here it is the name of a woman or a man, there some local characteristic or singular beauty of place or landscape that has been emphasised. Irritating and perplexing as it may be to the ordinary visitor, we may have in it the sort of principle which we shall see underlying the giving of names to children. Here the builder is recalling some very happy or important moment in his life, and calls the house which he is to occupy by a name which is to

give him the pleasure of a fond retrospect. Here he has called it by the name of some advantage of site or prospect which he hopes to profit by in the future. Here the title recalls to him some favourite hero, or some dear child or friend who has passed away. Here it indicates that he is a colonist who has taken to his new home some of the sacred fire of affection and memory which gathered round the place of his birth. There is a romance about the commonest things to those who will pause to look for it, because human nature finds it hard to escape from kindly imagination, which enables a man to see in the ordinary things of life the memories, the hopes, and the beauties with which he fondly clothes them.

So we shall find it to be with the names of children, they are not always the dull and prosaic things which we take them to be. As in the case of Holy Scripture, so also in the wayward regions of human choice, we may detect a principle, and classify the modes of action which are apparently pursued by those who exercise an unrestrained freedom in the giving of a name to the child now about to take his place in the world.

In one group of names we trace the influence of tradition. The choice is determined by some person or event in the past. Here it is an ancestral name which has distinguished the family for many generations, it appears in the pedigree and title-deeds of the estate, it is to be traced again and again on the monuments in the parish church, and is written in various characters in the registers of birth, marriage, and death. An estate may depend on it, the family honour is bound up in it. He who holds it feels the strong grip of history and tradition behind him, he has one motive at all events to hold him up until he can place the flaming torch in the hands of his successor. Here again the tradition is taken up out-

side the family, perhaps the family has no tradition or has lost it, but the father of the child who is to succeed him in the world is fired with enthusiasm for some hero out of the past of history, or in the contemporary history of the times. He wishes his child to recall to him and to himself the name of that great divine, or statesman, or general. He wishes for him such powers of mind or body as made the possessor of that name great among his fellows. Sometimes the result may be ludicrous: Alexander may turn out a coward, or Martin Luther an atheist, or Raphael an iconoclast, but for all that the name so given represents a veneration for the past, a longing to see what is good once more reproduced in the world, and a desire that the child now born should be a child of promise, to inherit past blessings and distribute new benefits to the race.

It is only a variation of this feeling which brings about the common practice of calling the new-born child after the name of some canonised saint. It is quite true that here we come across the belief, sometimes held only implicitly, that the child so named is put under the immediate patronage of the saint whose name he bears, and on whose feast-day he most probably came into the world. This is a belief held with great fervour in many parts of the Church, and together with the belief in the Guardian Angel, is calculated to lift up the heart into that region of supernatural life, which, although it is all around us, so few seem able to reach, and fewer still even to realise. But apart from this, it is no mean inducement to estimate aright the dignity of life, thus to be bound by name to a spiritual ancestry, to have ever before his eyes the example of one who saw God, and passed through the world as conqueror, who was honoured in his generation, and has received the homage and admiration of the Church.

He who binds his child to a noble past, has no doubt done more than satisfy his own enthusiasm for greatness, or gratify his own family pride; he has given to the child the power of a tradition of singular efficacy in forming life.

Passing on, we find ourselves face to face with another principle which would seem to underlie the name given to some children, barely separable from the former and yet distinct. If some names are retrospective and represent a tradition, others are prospective and represent a prophecy. David still hopes that Solomon his son may see the peace which was denied to him, and carry out the schemes for which he had made provision. We see in the names of some children hopes perhaps never destined to be realised, ambitions destined only to be disappointed, but also they serve to many in after-life as an embodiment of 'the prophecies which went before on' them,[1] to lift up and encourage the feeble heart, and to nerve to high endeavour. The mother of Zebedee's children has no doubt that her two sons are qualified to sit on the right hand and on the left of Christ in His kingdom, and she succeeds in inspiring them with the same belief, and helped them no doubt to face the reality of that which they had so imperfectly conceived. 'They who trust us educate us': and the name given by a good mother, if it fails as a prophecy, may yet remain as a strong inducement to realise that excellence to which others supposed us to be capable of attaining.

But there are many names which represent neither tradition nor prophecy, which are linked to no achievement or dignity in the past, and speak of no pinnacle of glory to be attained in the future, which yet represent a strong determination that the child shall take its place in the world as one who recognises the

[1] 1 Tim. i. 18.

dignity of ordinary life, unperturbed by sentiment, undisturbed by ambitions, resolute in filling the assigned part or rendering the prescribed service, and inflexible in the course of simple duty. The prosaic names of unknown people are a pledge, no less than the high-sounding title or the ambitious name, of the due recognition of the dignity of simple life, of hard work, and plain duty, and of the service of others, which is the highest claim to greatness.

If this be in any sense a true account of the principles to be detected in a thing apparently so arbitrary as the giving of a name to a child, we may see how useful it may be thus to recall the name given, in a solemn way, and before God, and to remind the child that, as he daily passes through a world full of mysteries and stamped with significance, so he, his existence, his position, his very name should form food to himself for reflection and encouragement. It may rest with him to justify his existence, and show that every life that is lived, even the most insignificant, has its own peculiar message to the world. Or he may be taught to see how much of responsibility reposes in him to carry on the traditions of his race; his name, whenever he hears it pronounced, should say to him '*respice*,' consider the past and how its influence touches your life, remember how God Who called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob, would have you correct the present by the past, and regulate present conduct by registered experience, and shape your actions by the force of tradition. Or his name might teach him the simpler lesson of '*aspice*,' that he had inherited a rich treasure in the present now lying at his feet, which he must resolutely set himself to adorn. Or once more, the future with its ambitions and glory might open up before him as an unfulfilled prophecy to which he was destined to answer, and '*prospice*' be the ever-widening task which he sets himself to fulfil.

III

But leaving these considerations, which some will regard as perhaps disputable and certainly fanciful, we shall find ourselves on more solid ground if we see in the distinguishing name an endeavour to single out the individual on the part of those who have been taught the importance of single lives, and an effort on the part of those who thus emphasised the Christian name in the Church Catechism to recall the possessor to a sense of his own value.

The individual name should certainly remind us of two things, of our vocation and of our individuality, both of them of the utmost importance in forming a right estimate of our position in the world.

Vocation, that is the great truth that we are where we are in response to the call of God, is an idea which lies scattered over almost the whole of the Bible. It is especially prominent in the New Testament, where Christians are besought to walk answerably to their vocation, where they are reminded that they are called to be Saints, that they have been called according to God's purpose, called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, called out of darkness, called to liberty, called to Eternal Life, called to inherit a blessing, called to glory and virtue. And it represents the fact that whether he knows it or not every one has been summoned into the world for an especial purpose and to do an especial work, for which God will provide the time and the means and the opportunity of its fulfilment, and to which an especial blessing is attached.

It is easy enough to recognise this truth in certain prominent cases, or when a work has manifestly been assigned to its proper workman. But it is idle to deny that vocation as an universal doctrine explanatory of the position of every living soul in this

teeming world, is difficult to grasp, and at first sight repugnant to common-sense.

Apart from the overpowering consideration of God's foreknowledge and predestination, back to which it is possible to carry the first beginnings of vocation, it seems impossible to believe that every stick and straw as it eddies along in the stream, every unknown unit of city life with its bundle or burden, slow or fast, has its definite aim and purpose in the evolution of a great scheme, and is, where it is, in obedience to a call. It seems difficult to believe that the butterfly has a vocation as it skims across the surface of life, just lighting on the busy throng to gaze and wonder, and then flying away, empty, useless, frivolous.[1] But the God Who has proclaimed His interest in the sparrows, and His minute care for our individual life, would seem to tell us that He admits of no intruders in His world; all who are there are there by His knowledge; more than that, they are there in obedience to His Will. If we once allow ourselves to be weighed down with doctrines of chance or fatalism, we shall find ourselves involved in theories which are incompatible either with God's Providence, God's Love, or God's Omnipotence. All those little lives which swarm in the alleys and byways of the city must be taken out of the statistics of the census or the average of attendance at the board school, they must be rescued from the contemptuous pity of the philanthropist, or the mechanical methods of the reformer, and we must claim for them that they each have a name, that in having a name they have a vocation, and that there is a place for each of them on God's earth, and a special mansion awaiting them in Heaven. God still comes to find His Moses in the ranks of the infants whom Pharaoh condemns to a promiscuous destruction. He still singles out of the gay and thoughtless throng the

[1] See also the author's *Religion*, p. 16.

Ignatius who is to do Him service, or out of the careless listeners an Augustine or a Francis. But those who are left behind with their one talent, are equally called with those who have their five or their two. If we lose the sense of God's guidance in vocation as a power in the world, we fall at once into wrong theories of life, and into errors worse than the difficulties from which we would fain escape.

But the bearing of this error on the individual life is even more disastrous. What can a unit in an undesirable class know of the dignity and importance of life? If he has come into life only to add to its social difficulties, to fill up still further an overcrowded world, to live unloved, and to die undesired, what motive has he to generous purpose or heroic action? It is indispensable to a right estimate of things, it is indispensable to a true life, that God should retain His hold on every portion of His own world, and on all that move in it. And so we ask of every child, great or small, wise or simple, 'What is your name?' For if you are important enough to live, you are important enough to have a name. You are known unto God; at least therefore, you ought to be known unto those who are thrown with you in the rough intercourse of life.

The call of God in its simplest form is a call to do two things: it is a call to live and a call to serve.

Perhaps the Jews of old, whose manifold imperfections we are disposed to sneer at, had a more vivid sense of the importance and privilege of simply living, than we have. They passed through life in the hope of the fulfilment of a great promise made to their race, and every child of Israel as he stepped into rank in the line of conscious existence felt himself to be in some way an heir to a rich inheritance of promise. Prophets and kings were not satisfied with whatever personal aggrandisement they might gain from the world: they waited long and earnestly for the manifestation to

Israel. Every Jewish mother would rejoice at the prospect opened up to her, every childless wife would lament her loss, while she praised God for what He withheld, as well as for what He gave. The privilege of simply living in the world of God's creating, with a share in His counsels and power to further His kingdom—this is a conception which we find more and more difficult to realise for ourselves and much more for the waifs and strays of society, who seem to us to be of no more use in the world than the flies and insects which sport about where men are toiling and working out the problem of life. It is possible that we are learning a greater respect for life, that we realise that all who are born are entitled to live, and that the conditions of their life should be made as healthy and happy as possible. It may be that we recognise the possible chances of finding a Moses among the outcasts, and a David in the sheepfolds: but we still have to learn for ourselves and to make others feel that there are no useless mouths in God's city, that those who faint and fail or hinder and block the way, have missed their vocation and have frustrated God's purpose concerning them. We must honour and train up the young, not in the hope merely of finding a chance Moses among many outcasts, but because we are dealing with immortal beings whom God has called upon to live, as workmen in His building and as citizens in His kingdom, all of whom, therefore, we mark off with a name as those who exercise an independent function for Him. For, in the second place, God's call is a call to serve. The work is large and there is need for many workmen, some He is calling here, some there; and we have labelled the work to be done under several departments which we call professions, trades, or occupations, to which we assign the several workmen, as the call of God which brought them into the world became the louder vocation which called them to the

particular work which He gives them to do. This is a truth recognised in the case of certain professions, but we ought not to rest until we have recognised it in all, that the call of God is not an exceptional thing belonging only to the more dignified professions, but that we should go here and go there, wherever it may be, in answer to a vocation, and that in following out our vocation will consist our perfection, and God's answer to our frequent prayer, 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven.' Life, then, apart from the sense of the responsibility and privilege of living at all, acquires a fresh dignity, as we take up our position in it, not merely as a place where we can hope to get on or succeed, but as a post where we can do a real and effectual work for God.

There is no doubt as to this call of God, first to Himself and then to the special work which He assigns to us.

It was His call, as we have seen, that caused us first to be, which caused us to look out on this world of experience just opening out before us, with wondering and expectant eyes. It was His call that sent us to school, and gave us those keys of knowledge, with which we might open hereafter the as yet hidden treasures of the world. It was His call that gave us those aptitudes, tastes as we called them, which seemed to determine the direction of our after-life. The wishes of parents and friends were part of the call, circumstances, as we call them, were also included in it. But more than all there was the voice, now faint, now clear, which spoke to us alone, which we recognised as the voice of God. This, or something like this, constituted our vocation. 'Son, go work to-day in My vineyard': [1] and on our acceptance or rejection of it depends our perfection.

If we grasp this great truth we shall the better see

[1] S. Matt. xxi. 28.

why the shore is strewed with wrecks, and littered with failures. They are the wrecked and ruined lives of those who have missed their vocation and despised the work which God gave them to do. Here are servants who refuse the call of God to an honourable condition of service that they may grasp at a perilous freedom to be bought only at a great risk out of the very jaws of temptation. Here are young men and young women who despise the quiet life of their forefathers in the country town or village and escape to London and the big towns as if the streets were paved with gold, to find out their mistake only when it is too late. Here are the young people who start with the idea that self-pleasing is the first aim, and so seeking their life most miserably lose it. The steady voice of vocation is shouted down by the attractions of more tempting offers, and because men shrink from serious life or the responsibilities of an arduous post they think that unfitness for other things is a sufficient indication of their capacity for doing what they like. It is not merely the inadequate stipend, nor the voice of controversy, nor the general unsettlement which are responsible for the present diminution in the numbers of those who present themselves as candidates for Holy Orders. This profession is not alone in suffering from a want of seriousness which would regard life as a lottery where success depends on a successful choice, not as a vocation in which we follow out the call of God.

Once to have grasped the great truth of vocation that life itself is a call from God to every one who is dowered with this perilous gift, and also a call to do some special work for Him, is to have advanced several steps towards the proper realisation of the importance of our own individuality. 'I have called thee by thy name: thou art Mine.'[1] Every one has a special work

[1] Isa. xliii. 1.

to do, however insignificant that work may appear to be, and the work of God is to that extent crippled by those who misuse their five talents and by those that bury their one. There is no doubt as to the minute care which the Church bestows upon the individual. The office of Infant Baptism in our Prayer Book might seem at first sight to be out of all proportion to the importance of the tiny recipient of that Sacrament. But it bears testimony to the extreme value in God's sight of all His children, and to the greatness and necessity of the gift there bestowed for the proper discharge of His special service. And a singular harm is done by those who slur over or disfigure this office in which the Church honours with an equal and impartial recognition all who are heirs of the grace of life, and are here born again of water and of the Spirit. So when the same child is brought to be confirmed the Bishop lays his hand upon his head individually. When he kneels at the Altar to receive the Bread of Life, it is the Body which is given for him, and the Blood which is shed for him, as if no one else beside existed. Absolution by the precious Blood of Jesus is for him as if all the infinite worth of the Atonement were centred on him. Never, perhaps, does the loving care of the Church for the individual stand out more clearly than at those moments when it is contrasted with the vulgarity of those who would consign to the grave, with every sign of neglect, the body of one contemptuously called 'a pauper.' The dead body of one whom God has called upon to live in His world, albeit in a rude coffin and treated with scant honour, is equally the shrine of the soul of a 'dear brother,' with those whom the world honours with a splendid funeral. Dives has his funeral, and Lazarus is borne of angels. It is this individuality which is being constantly threatened, and which must needs be defended all through life.

We are conscious in this very opening of the Cate-

chism, and also in the services of Holy Baptism and Confirmation, of one especial danger which has to be met and warded off, not once nor twice, but constantly in the Christian course, and that is the danger of a ruined and distorted self, by reason of outward foes and inward tendencies, which must be considered later on. The delicate proportion which exists between body, soul, and spirit is in danger of being destroyed, and therefore the devil is bidden to stand away from the passions lest they should rebel against the authority of the Will; the mind is kept fixed by a right belief on God, and the spirit is kept open and free by the hedge of duty, which prevents the encroachment of any evil which might shut out God, or hinder the freedom of approach to Him. It must never be forgotten that sin is the great solvent of our individual worth and greatness. If we wish to do good in the world we must be good ourselves. Every nerve and fibre of our being must be strained to that end, and consecrated to that purpose.

In spite of the fact that empires have been reared in blood, and fortunes made in reckless contempt for public and private honesty, still the records of the world go to show that only good men will do any permanent good in the world; and if there seem to be instances that prove the contrary, it will be seen that the good was done, not by, but in spite of, those who insulted the just decrees of God. A good deal more than our own salvation depends on the sanctification of our lives. God's work requires good men, and God honours the individual for what by His grace he may become. Every sin, every evil habit, every neglect impairs the usefulness of an agent in God's world. And it is a sad thing to contemplate how much of our time, by reason of sin, has to be spent in moral repair, which might have been spent in useful work. More than half our strength is diverted to keep

sin from invading our life by a ruinous overthrow; while perhaps the work of God is marred by our rebellious self, a self which greedily grasps at the good things of life and is selfish and evil. It is no slight indication of the worth set by the Church on individual life, that after she has marked her sense of its importance by the giving of a name, she at once proclaims open war with everything which might damage its usefulness or impair its worth.

But apart from this danger which is always imminent, the honour which we have seen to be bestowed without distinction upon the individual is surely designed to correct another evil. The ungodly lies in wait to destroy, but also the child of God may forget his own worth. There is a tendency to leave the battle to champions, and to allow Goliath to threaten rather than make oneself ridiculous by going against him in an unequal combat. It is only where a David steps out of the ranks, a child ill-matched in strength as regards his adversary and utterly unequipped in weapons of war, it is only when the champion lies beaten and destroyed at the hands of a boy, that it occurs to the faint-hearted and feeble that what he has accomplished might have been equally effected by the resolute faith of the poorest and weakest among them. No one may refuse to fight because he is no giant, nor withhold his testimony because he is afraid of adverse criticism. The possession of great gifts has not always rendered the possessor of them a blessing to his fellow-men. His knowledge may be kept only as a chained library to which others have no access; his powers and endowments may all be used for self, or made to minister to a spirit of rivalry in the battle of life. Holy Scripture puts before us in more than one place the triumph of the weak over the strong, the preference of the younger to the elder, the election of the alien before the member of the privileged race, the Gentile before the Jew, the

Samaritan before the Israelite who despised him, the Publican before the Pharisee. Our Blessed Lord Himself rose upon the world out of the low and depressed ranks of the poor, and chose His apostles from the unknown and illiterate. So of old Joseph the despised boy, the victim of cruel wrong, torn from his father's home, sent among strangers, tempted, punished, degraded, and forgotten, is prepared by God for the moment for which His Providence had designed him. The frightened boy who had been sold and banished lived to say that 'God did send me before you to preserve life.'[1] A little maid, an unknown and unnamed unit from among the captives, brings to Naaman in his affliction the good news which secured to him his recovery from leprosy.[2] From time to time Christ still comes to the fisherman's net, and places the peasant on a pedestal as a benefactor of the race. Sometimes He comes to the shop, and singles out some Matthew from the receipt of custom to be an Apostle and Evangelist of fame and honour. Sometimes He singles out an officer in the army, a lawyer, a runaway slave. But there are Andrews whom the world never hears of, Matthews who still remain at the receipt of custom, although in heart they have followed Jesus; there is many a Cornelius still in the army, many a repentant sinner whose repentance never comes abroad. God gives to those who listen to His call a work beyond their work, which elevates drudgery into an imperial enterprise, and puts His own servants into the posts best suited for them, and calls the most unlikely agents to do that particular work for which He has fitted them, at that particular time when He has need of their especial powers. God's work is not done by a series of men of genius, all excellent in the same sort of degree, and conspicuous for striking capacities. A great building is not raised by a series of architects, there is a place

[1] Gen. xlv. 5. [2] 2 Kings v. 2.

among those who rear it for the common labourer who knows the value of honest work even in places where 'scamping' would not be liable to detection. A campaign is not successfully carried through by an army of generals, there is a place in it for the humblest member of the commissariat who supplies the marching power of the army. Here is a truth of individuality which it is well firmly to grasp, that every individual life is to be welcomed and honoured and named, not because it is a life which may possibly develop into what we call greatness, but because, if it can be kept to its purpose, it must of necessity be a useful life, in the varied fields of work which open out in the manifold counsel of God.

And so as we name the child with his separate name, and start him off on his separate course, we shall fight, once more, against that tendency which would look upon single lives as belonging to groups and families, turned out as it were from one mould, and separable into abstract classifications. So we shall refuse to allow an unloving poor law to classify the poor, the unfortunate, the afflicted, the idle and vagabond under the head of 'paupers,' as if they were so much social refuse who had lost the rights of individuality, as if society had no further interest in their condition, and as if humanity refused to own them. We shall resent the idea which underlies the convenient appellation of 'hands' if it means that the owner has no care for the souls and individual interests of those who are employed by him, whom he regards as so many members to be used, not as so many names to be honoured. We shall refuse again to use generalisations as convenient folds of destruction into which to drive those who disagree with us, without taking the trouble to understand either the position or the meaning of our antagonists. We have not disposed of Zacchæus by saying that all Publicans are sinners, or answered the

challenge of Christ by saying that He is a Samaritan. Nothing is more remarkable in Christ's teaching than to see how His conduct, whether tender or severe, His methods, His teaching, varied with the individual He addressed. Pilate was a man, not a Roman governor; Zacchæus was an earnest inquirer, not a dishonest Publican; Nicodemus was an ardent seeker after truth, not a member of the sect which most vehemently opposed him. 'Honour all men.' It is the apostolic precept, which would teach us to give to every one the honour which belongs to a being, dowered by God with life, redeemed by the precious Blood, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. It is a call to us further to recognise a possible leader of mankind, certainly one who has been called into the world with a work to do and a message to give, and therefore we ask, 'What is your name?' God has called you, we would welcome you, most of all we would bid you remember your own worth, and the greatness of the issues which lie before you.

CHAPTER II

THE INFLUENCE OF OTHERS ON LIFE

'And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.'

I am sure that Nature is a teacher, and a great teacher, if so be that we have been in another school first.

DIRECTLY we have asserted our strong belief in the inalienable rights of individuality which belong to us all, we become conscious of that other set of facts which exhibit man in various stages of dependence on others, from the healthy influence which ministers to his more perfect development, to the entire subjugation by another's will which leaves him a slave instead of a free man, a copy instead of an original, a machine instead of a human being. A glance will show us how dependent our natural life is on others; the cries which the infant first utters are typical of his utter dependence on external aid during the early years of his life; as he grows up he is fed and warmed and clothed and healed of his sicknesses by different branches of organised human skill and labour: the most independent mind will own that it owes something at least to the intellectual bent given to it by its earliest teachers; while morally for good or for evil the character has been moulded and formed either by accepting or resisting the influences which have surrounded its growth. The circumstances of our life lie embedded like strata

in the recesses of our character, some virtues for which we are now conspicuous are rooted in a remote past, certain influences which have ceased to move us are buried away as fossils or as hidden seams of still useful potentiality. Like Ulysses, we can almost say, 'I am a part of all that I have met,' so powerful is the impact of other lives and other powers on our own, from our childhood to our grave.

I

This great principle of influence as a prime factor in the formation of character is recognised and carried up into the very highest region of the spiritual life, by the old institution of sureties, or godfathers and godmothers, in Baptism, which the Catechism in more than one place emphasises and explains as a matter of extreme significance. The meaning, advantages, and responsibilities of sponsors, together with their historical status, have been dwelt upon in a previous volume of this series.[1] It is only necessary, therefore, in this place to insist on their representative character, *i.e.* as representing the Church which brings helpless infants to Holy Baptism, as the faithful four bore the helpless cripple into the presence of Christ: and further, to show how they fulfil a very definite function in doing for the child a necessary act which he cannot then do for himself, and in promising to do more, to make him 'perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.'[2] Roughly speaking, the special work done by the sponsors is twofold: at the moment they act as the child's proxies in the definite contribution which every recipient of God's bounty is required to make as a condition of receiving it; and further, they promise for the future that the child shall enter on life pledged to a course of action, to believe and to do and to avoid

[1] Stone, *Holy Baptism*, pp. 100-109. [2] 2 Tim. iii. 17.

certain things, as to all of which he shall be definitely and carefully instructed by those who themselves know and believe and are conscious of the great issues which are at stake.

As representatives of the Church, they bear witness to a great principle that the followers of the Crucified, like their Master before them, are to seek and to save that which was lost: that the disciples have 'to go,' to take definite steps and to exert themselves to extend the flock of Christ: that they have to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.[1] The presence of the sponsors bringing the child to Holy Baptism bears witness to the principle which underlies all good influence, and our responsibility in using it; it is the same principle which is at the bottom of all schemes of true education, and of missionary effort at home and abroad, and is in itself a perpetual protest against the indolent rebellion of the first murderer expressed in the selfish phrase, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'[2]

And in noticing this it is not a little significant to see how abundantly our Lord rewarded the faith shown by others for those in whom they were interested. We have already noticed the instance of the healing of the palsied man brought before Jesus by the exertions of his friends, and we are expressly told that His action of healing was manifested, 'when He saw their faith.'[3] Our Lord praises again in terms of admiration the faith of the Centurion displayed on behalf of his servant.[4] The belief of the nobleman is made the measure of his reward as regards the healing of his son.[5] The belief of Martha is put forward as a preliminary necessity to the manifestation of God's glory in the raising of Lazarus.[6] We cannot ourselves escape from the influence of others, and we cannot perform

[1] S. Matt. xxviii. 19. [2] Gen. iv. 9. [3] S. Mark ii. 3.
[4] S. Luke vii. 9. [5] S. John iv. 50. [6] S. John xi. 40.

our actions so that they should have no bearing on the lives of others; but we are not prepared to see the persistence with which this influence is put before us as a duty, or to recognise in the sponsors at the Font a type of a Christian's attitude to his fellow-men throughout his life.

But the sponsors are not merely representative whether of the whole church or of a principle; we have already noted two very definite functions which they have to undertake. In the first place, they have, as we have seen, to act as proxies for the child in a notable action which that child is required to perform, while as yet he is incapable of doing it. At the Font the child is confronted with the first exhibition in his life of a great principle of divine action, that God requires as a preliminary to the bestowal of His grace, a recognition on the part of the recipient that he understands, accepts, and values the gift there bestowed upon him. God has willed to show us again and again that He respects and cherishes human freewill, that all His blessings are bestowed, saving the integrity of this, and all His discipline exercised to maintain it. The fact that He requires us to ask for in prayer that which He wills to bestow without our prayer, is a conspicuous indication of the principle. God will not pauperise the recipients of His bounty, or force His blessings upon unkindly and unwilling hearts.

And so in Holy Baptism, God gives to the child the gift of new-birth, *i.e.* 'in the case of infants, who inherit the taint and distortion of original sin, the love of God provides that they may be unconsciously set free from that which they have unconsciously received,'[1] but at the same time He demands from the child, on his part, repentance whereby he forsakes sin, and faith whereby he stedfastly believes the promises of God made to him in that Sacrament.[2] And this repentance

[1] Stone, *Holy Baptism*, p. 100. [2] Church Catechism.

and faith the sponsors must guarantee until, when the child is of an age to know right from wrong, he can furnish them himself. Here clearly there is no room for moral bankrupts and spiritual paupers who promise and offer that of which they themselves are quite destitute. God, we believe, will not allow the child to suffer for the sin of others, but it is robbing God of the respect due to Him to represent repentance and faith on the part of the recipient of Baptism out of a life dead in trespasses and sins, and a heart which neither has seen God nor known Him. But in a more intelligible way than this the sponsors commit themselves to a definite line of action as regards the child who has been baptized. As far as they can use their influence, the child goes forth pledged to a decided course throughout his life. They are not of those who launch the child into the waves of this troublesome world, and tell him to find out the course which best commends itself to him, to keep an open mind and to think for himself. They are not of those who say, if there has been a Fall at all, it was a fall upwards; or of those who believe that God's commands are useless and obsolete. They stand there with their hand on the child, representing to him experience, and Faith, and they tell him that they pledged him in the most solemn manner while he was yet unconscious to believe and to do certain things of the utmost consequence to his moral welfare, and that their whole endeavour will be directed to enable him to act intelligently, bravely, and skilfully as a free agent in matters where to hesitate is to be lost, and to be uncertain is to fail.

It is to guardians such as these that the Church commits the child still freshly sprinkled with Baptismal dew; and the nature of their undertaking is explained to them in no uncertain tones. The Priest is instructed to speak to the godparents of the child, before they leave the church, as follows: 'For-

asmuch as this child hath promised by you his sureties to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve Him; ye must remember, that it is your parts and duties to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he hath here made by you. And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons; and chiefly ye shall provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health: and that this child may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life: remembering always that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession: which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness: continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtues and godliness of living.'[1] And then follows an earnest reminder that the child is to be brought to the Bishop for Confirmation at a suitable time and with due preparation for that Rite.

II

With this solemn injunction laid upon them the sponsors must of necessity seek proxies to enable them to carry out this serious charge to the wellbeing and proper development of the child. The child must be trained, there is no escaping this: if he is not trained by duly qualified teachers he will be trained by what are called circumstances. The tender vine may be either nailed upon the sunny wall, where training and restraint mean freedom to expand and develop into

[1] The Ministration of the Public Baptism of Infants.

fruitfulness, or it may trail along the ground through the mire, laying hold of such chance sticks and stones as come in its path, trodden down, unpruned, undirected in a barren liberty to go astray. Human nature cannot stand alone, it must needs lay hold of some prop and guidance; it is for those who are interested in the child's welfare to choose what these shall be.

The conscientious god-parent knows that his first representatives will be the parents of the child, or whatever represents the home influence which will be brought to bear on his early years. The question of whether it is right or wrong to baptize a child which can only be handed back to degrading and sinister influences, has already been discussed in the volume above alluded to.[1] Allowance perhaps, however, ought to be made in nominally Christian countries for the general atmosphere of Christianity in which the child will find himself; and, also, we have not exhausted the depth of mercy which underlies the experience of the Psalmist, 'When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up.'[2] But apart from such important and anxious questions, the godparent must feel how very much must of necessity depend on the character of the home training to which the child is committed by him. 'That this child may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life.'—This injunction obviously lays a great charge on those who are responsible for the home life, where the child receives his first impressions, his first encouragements, and his first rebukes: where he should learn to pray, and grow up shielded, if possible, by the sheltering leaves of tenderness, affection, and reverence. We are elaborating painfully, and with faltering steps, our systems of education for the young. Here is an

[1] Stone, *Holy Baptism*, pp. 106, 107.
[2] Ps. xxvii. 10.

elementary education of the very first importance which it is the peculiar function of the home to impart. What this means, we know too well, in the case of those who are swaddled, nurtured, and degraded in every circumstance of cruelty, want, and wickedness; but apart from this, there is a growing fear that the sponsors who give the child back cannot depend, as they ought to be able to depend, on the right training of the Christian home. There are children who are looked upon as encumbrances, there are those who are left entirely to servants, and there are those who drink in insensibly from their earliest years a spirit of worldliness and indifference, which is the atmosphere which pervades a godless home, the home which seems to have its conscience clause to prevent the intrusion of religion after family prayers, or its system of daily routine from which any exhibition of its beauty and obligations is rigorously excluded lest it should offend the worldly members of the household; and which, like an obtrusive toy, must on no account be brought from the nursery into the drawing-room.

Parents should remember that they are as godfathers and godmothers to their own children in their own house, and that no amount of public service in Church or State will compensate for the neglect at home of a primary duty to God. There is evidently a strong temptation to inscribe Corban over home duties, and those unromantic claims which seem incompatible with the loud calls of public activities. A man is not a hero to his own servant, too often, alas! because his servant sees too much, but also because he sees too little, of the man in his private life. Why is there a certain sting in the taunt that the sons of clergymen most often turn out badly? Untrue as most of these sweeping generalisations are, still no one can deny that there are still Elis, who by neglecting their own house bring scandal on the people of the Lord. There are still

Lots, who fail to make their influence felt at home, so that a wife fails at a critical moment, sons-in-law mock, and daughters are contaminated with the evil influence of the place where they live. We English people are proud of our homes, we think much of them, and show that we value them; and, no doubt, as the Roman Empire made its strides of annexation and progress by the colonies which it planted throbbing with imperial life, and strong in law and order and civilisation, so we should make greater strides in winning the world for Christ, if we could plant down Christian families in our streets and squares, in our towns and villages, through which the individual could make himself felt, because he had obtained that which was promised for him that he should obtain, the virtuous bringing-up, and the constant sight of people, pledged like himself, paying their vows unto the Lord, and walking at liberty because they seek His commandments. Surely philanthropy, and religious exercises, and even works of Christian charity done at the expense or even in defiance of family life are, to say the least of it, a mistake. In old days the family used to worship together, even if it were in the family pew;[1] now, one goes here, and another goes there, and one is busy pursuing this scheme and another that, very often at the expense of home duties. Next to the duty of personal holiness should come the sense of obligation which belongs to father and mother, brother and sister, to study the duties of home life, and to endeavour to make this a circle of living fire which shall brighten and burn with the glow of Christian excellence and Christian love.

[1] For a curious defence of the family pew, see *Life of Phillips Brooks*, vol. i. pp. 32, 33. 'This family life was also extended into the church, where the family met in its pew as a family in the Divine presence. It is one of the gifts of the much-derided eighteenth century, this family feeling it bequeathed, symbolised by the pewing of churches,' etc.

There would seem to be two things especially which are lacking at the present moment, and which must be supplied, if home is to take its proper place in the scheme of religious training which sponsors undertake to provide for the children whom they bring to the Font. We need Christian discipline and Christian persuasion. In a luxurious age there will always be a shrinking from anything which may seem to give trouble at the moment. Discipline involves assertion of authority coupled sometimes with disagreeable scenes, and so the child is allowed to stumble on, as best he can, with faults uncorrected, habits of self-control unformed, unwarned of his dangers, unaware of his helps, and unassisted in forming his ideas. He is not helped to renounce, because he must know a little of the world; he is not encouraged to believe, because he must keep an open mind; he is not worried about duty so long as his inclinations do not openly violate the laws of propriety or the dictates of convenience. An indolent parent is at no loss for a formula to justify him in his masterly inaction, which he dignifies by the idea of natural development in the perceptive powers of the child. Coleridge's botanical garden has many varieties, overgrown with weeds, because never prejudiced to strawberries or roses. Much can be done, and ought to be done, by the elder in warning the younger against the inevitable temptations of life, which made their baptismal promises so necessary. And also much could be done in helping them to answer to the vocation of which we were thinking in the preceding chapter. We know how in old days the highest profession, such as Holy Orders, was enterprised in obedience to a father's command. Men unfitted and unwilling were coerced into the service of the Sanctuary in order to hold a family living or to satisfy some parental desire. Now all has been altered; we have gone into the other

extreme; valuable talents are thrown away, and perhaps young lives are spending their energies in driving cattle which, by the help of a little encouragement at home, might have been devoting their powers to the highest needs and interests of mankind. The old coercion is gone, thank God for it, but we might fairly look for that reasonable and gentle persuasion for lack of which many a child of God is losing his way, and is being false to his plighted vows without knowing it.

A great deal is being said about the dearth of candidates for Holy Orders in quarters where we might reasonably look for some exhibition of Christian chivalry and devotion. Many reasons are assigned for it; most probably there are a variety of reasons. But it remains a sad fact, that when the army and navy and other noble professions make their appeal to our public schools and meet with a generous response from the best and noblest of our sons, the immediate service of Christ in the ministry of His Church seems to offer attractions to a diminishing number. It is only too possible that some of the chill air which damps ardour comes from the home, where religion too often is criticised and despised; where the utmost encouragement that can be looked for is negatively a non-refusal, which is not incompatible with a good deal of subtle discouragement and contemptuous wonder. The encouragement which the Church ought to be able to depend upon in the homes of her children should be positive, a leading that way, even if it be the way of sacrifice, towards the generous undertaking of difficult and unpopular tasks. It must always be a hard matter rightly to estimate influence at its proper worth, but if the lives of some of our greatest men could be analysed, it would be seen how much this quiet unobserved power has added to the formation of character. It will be a blow indeed to the Christian training of our children if sponsors can no longer reckon on the good

influence of home. Every one who is concerned with so delicate and subtle a blessing as that which belongs to a Christian home, must look to it that he maintains its sanctity and develops more and more its powers for good, lest when God visits His people, and His judgments are abroad, His servant stands forth ashamed, who in working for Him neglected his own soul, and forgot his duties, and was false to those whom it was his duty to cherish.

But if home teaching and home influence are the first and most important factors, in the formation of the child's character, on which the sponsors ought to be able to depend, there speedily comes a time when other and more direct pressure must be brought to bear in the form of a systematic and definite education which will include instruction, training, and discipline, and the forming of habits which are to last through life. The sponsors, then, to whom the spiritual guardianship of the child was committed, ought to be able to count in a Christian country on a Christian system of education, reaching up from the elementary schools in the different parishes to the highest educational systems in the land. There are few subjects which have so fully occupied public attention during the last thirty years as that of education. We have sacrificed much and have been promised much in connection with this great cause, but the prevailing sentiment at the present moment is one of profound disappointment that schemes which promised so much have conferred so little real benefit on the children at large. A generation is rising up wilful, disobedient, selfish, and irreverent, keeping perhaps more free from some of the brutalities of sin which would render them obnoxious to criminal penalties, but even more tainted with all the subtler indications of alienation from God. We see a sharp contrast between instruction and education, and the sad phenomenon of those who are rendered unfitted

by what they learn, for posts of usefulness which they might fill. There is no question more full of anxiety at the present moment to those who have the care of children than this, What is the nature of that system to which I commit my child to be educated, that is, the machinery whereby all his latent powers may be drawn out and developed for his work in life, by which all tendencies may be encouraged and nurtured if they are good, and checked and redirected if they are bad? For school is not a place for training merely the head or the intellect, but the whole man; a place where we hope to get ready and send out those who are to fill the different places in Church and State, able for their work, furnished and equipped as men whose sole aim in life is the glory of God, whose motive-principle is duty, and whose ambition is to do good. When the child was given back from the Font into the hands of those who were to train him and remind him of his promises, everything seemed to be full of God. The things to be avoided were those things which were displeasing to God; the guiding principle of his life was to be faith in God, the path of duty was to begin, continue, and end in God. But when the child passes the door of the school, at the time when he is most sensitive to impressions, most observant, and most inquisitive—what does he find? A strange and chilling reserve about that subject which he was taught to believe to be the most important. 'We do not talk much about God here' would seem to be the fittest expression of the attitude of those around him. Either religion is kept out with a conscience clause as if it were a dangerous explosive, or it is treated as a sort of extra subject for those who like to take it up, like French or Latin, or it is expelled altogether as a thing about which the child must ask his mother, and not those who are concerned to impart to him useful knowledge.

It is not the question of how much or how little religion is to be taught which is so disastrous, it is rather the attitude of those who are responsible for schemes of education. For many years now, in schools and in dealing with her heathen subjects, the State has proclaimed with no uncertain voice, 'I am ashamed of the Gospel of Christ,' and ostrich-like would shut her eyes to the unwelcome conclusion, that under the plea of a more perfect education her children are being robbed of excellences and powers which once were theirs before they forgot God. Until religion has its proper place of honour as pervading all education, and not as an optional subject, the guardians of the child can only feel that their responsibilities increase when they hand the child over to its so-called teachers. At school he may learn evil without being taught he has to renounce it, he may be taught how to make his way in the world without learning the faith which is to make him wise unto salvation, and the rough path of duty may be forsaken for the smooth road of inclination. Never does sectarian bitterness show itself in more ugly colours than when it stands at the door of the school and says to the Christian guardians of the Christian child, not 'You shall not teach my children in your way,' but 'You shall not teach your own children in your own faith.' A wise Solomon would surely indicate still, as the true mother of the child, who loves it and cherishes it, her who says, 'Give her (my rival) the living child,' if she claims it, 'and in no wise slay it'; if she claims the child let her take it, and teach it at least something about God; while he would refuse to recognise any signs of motherhood in her who, in the desperate exigencies of party bitterness, says, 'Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.'[1] Education is a thing at once so grand and so vital that our very existence as a nation depends on it. It is a

[1] 1 Kings iii. 16-28.

divorce which ought never to be contemplated—between religious and secular education;—all true education must be religious, and those who have the care of children know better than all beside, that the tree of Life must be planted close to the tree of Knowledge.

But in the exhortation to god-parents, quoted above, special mention is made of one form of instruction which strikes upon our ear with an old-world sound, but of which there is still a considerable survival among us. The child, as a means of instruction, is to be called upon 'to hear sermons.' The sermon in church is looked upon as having a very definite place in helping him to realise his duties and know his dangers. The suggestions given to clergy how they are to preach are many and varied, friendly and the reverse, but we seldom read of any advice as to how the people are to hear and receive sermons. The extraordinary numbers of sermons preached, and the attraction which they still have, indicate that this mode of instruction is still popular; but on the other hand, as at the door of the school, so at the door of the church, it is quite possible that the child may meet with deterrents instead of encouragements to hear sermons. He may meet crowds of the young and unemployed flocking out of church in the face of the preacher, evidently believing themselves to need no such instruction. He will become conscious of the critical attitude among some of those that remain, as those who would still inquire, 'What will this babbler say?'[1] When he leaves the church he will find it difficult to believe, from the conversation around him, that any or all of the audience were not better competent to instruct than the preacher. Children have to be taught not only to hear but also how to hear; and some of the advice which is now given to preachers might well be transferred to the hearers. First of all, there should

[1] Acts xvii. 18.

be a clear conception of what the sermon is, and is not, meant to effect. It is wrong to despise sermons, but it is also a mistake to misunderstand their position in the ecclesiastical economy. We have traces of a sermon occupying very much the place which it does now in the Holy Eucharist, at a very early period in the Church,[1] where it probably speedily merged into an exposition of the Gospel and Epistle. The Holy Eucharist is the only service in which a sermon is specifically ordered in the Prayer Book; but with the expansion of our needs, and in view of the manifold calls and opportunities which lie before the preacher, not once or twice on Sundays and holy days, but frequently as the occasion may require, the ministry of preaching is made use of for correction, reproof, and instruction in righteousness, and has been sometimes, and might be always, a mighty engine for spreading the Truth, and be helpful both in building up the faithful as well as in bringing to those outside Christian influences the glorious gospel of the Blessed God. Those who have the care of children might at least fulfil their duty in this respect, that they set themselves to stop the foolish and unwise criticism of sermons, and that they endeavour, by their own patience and seriousness, to set the ministry of preaching once more on the basis which it ought to occupy as an important part of the teaching office of the Church. And if the child is warned not to despise, so he must be warned not to over-estimate sermons. Religion no doubt has suffered, and suffers still, from those who make the hearing of a sermon their sole religious duty. 'Preaching the gospel!' is a phrase which in many cases has been pressed out of all meaning, as if there were a virtue in the mere reading of the doctor's prescription, or as if the study of the signpost were equivalent to an actual progress in the journey of life.

[1] S. Just. Mart. *Apolog.* i. 67.

And while he recognises the importance of respect for sermons on the one hand, and the necessity for not over-rating them on the other, the Christian child must be taught to feel that there is a duty which belongs to those who hear sermons as well as to those who preach them, and that if the preacher must say, as he fixes his eyes upon God, 'Yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel,'[1] the listener must say to himself with all earnestness and persistency, 'Take heed therefore how ye hear.'[2] For the child must be taught to believe that in hearing the sermon he is hearing a message from God, from Whom he comes and to Whom he is going, and to Whose service he has been pledged. It will be difficult sometimes even for a child to believe this, and the attitude of his superiors may make it more difficult. The utterance which he is called upon to accept is faltering, feeble, and quite unworthy, or it is an undisguised display of self, or it is an enunciation of doctrine which seems to contradict all that he has been taught to believe most sacred, and which it would be a peril to the soul to follow. This is a difficulty which our Blessed Lord seems to have dealt with when He stated the principle on which His followers should deal with the authorised yet false teaching of His own day: 'The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.'[3] That is, in so far as the Scribes and Pharisees enforce the law and precepts of Moses, obey them, but do not imitate their conduct. We should indeed be in a spiritual difficulty, if we felt ourselves bound to carry out the precepts of every sermon which we hear. But as the duty of honouring our parents is never more conspicuously beautiful than when it is displayed towards a dishonourable, unkind, or even brutal parent, so Christian reverence is never more

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 16. [2] S. Luke viii. 18. [3] S. Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

lovely than when it is displayed in the face of what is unworthy, of what must be received even with protest from those who are set over us in the Lord. The most successful sermon ever recorded is the one brief cry of woe uttered by the prophet Jonah: 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.'[1] It carried with it the conversion of a city. There have been times when the dignity of the message surpassed and swallowed up the personality of the messenger, just as there have been times when the messenger seems to have strangled the message by his own obtrusive personality. There have not been wanting examples of great men who have strongly resisted the evening criticism of the Sunday's sermon. Certainly it will be of little use to call upon children to hear sermons if at the same time we make no secret of our own contempt for them, and show them where to look for weak points, and how generally to disregard their teachers.

Nor is this spirit of contemptuous criticism damaging only to those who are taught, it reacts also in imperceptible ways on the teacher as well. Too often there comes to be a tacit understanding between the preacher and those to whom he ministers which seems to say to him, 'If you are willing to say something of the usual length, which does not offend us, or jar upon our feelings, or have the appearance of dictating to us, we will listen to you; if not, our remedy is simple.' And then what can be expected from him but the dead perfunctory enunciation of platitudes as from a man who must say something? But if, on the other hand, he were to feel that he was speaking to those who say, 'We have to labour much in other parts of God's vineyard; we have neither the time nor the aptitude for the special study of these questions; you are there to teach us; we look to you

[1] Jonah iii. 4.

to guide us, while we reserve to ourselves the verification of our own reading, and the obedience due to the authoritative teaching of the Church,'—here a man would be encouraged to do his best. The faults are by no means always on the side of the preacher. However unworthy and perfunctory the address may be, no speaker could fail to catch some inspiration from the moral confidence which mounts up from the audience to the spokesman whom they trust, and who exhibit something of that humble and teachable mind which is prepared to extract some good even from the worst sermon, if it be only patience, which George Herbert found as a Pandora legacy at the bottom of the box, which had contained only a mass of useless trifles. How to hear, how to receive instruction, is a spiritual acquirement of which the young should be made speedy possessors, for if it be true, as Dean Church says, that one of the things which a preacher will least care to meet at the Day of Judgment will be his own sermons, it may be also true that one of the saddest things which will then befall the ordinary listener will be the condemnation of the old prophet, which wails out in its sadness, 'This is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.'[1]

III

Everything has conspired to show the godparents the exceeding value, in God's sight, of every one, even the smallest of His children. No training or instruction must be spared to fit them for their high destiny, and to make them worthy of what has been already done for them. But the privileges of the baptized are summarised for us in the Catechism in forcible and pregnant terms. The giving of the name marked a great occasion in life, and the bestowal of precious gifts. The name given, and the promises so

[1] Isa. xxviii. 12.

earnestly plighted, coincided with and signalised that moment to which a child may look back with pride and say, then 'I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.' It is well to examine carefully these terms that we may value more our own privileges, and consider more earnestly the responsibility of influence laid upon all who are entrusted with God's children, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is, and always must be, a matter of exceeding difficulty to reconcile the great results which are promised with the apparent insignificance of the means employed. People rebel against a doctrine which seems to attach an almost mechanical power to a Sacrament, and which indicates an exact moment in which a great spiritual change takes place in the recipient. They point to the impossibility of noting any striking and obvious difference between the baptized and the unbaptized in after-life. They would even point to instances where the unbaptized are apparently men of greater integrity and usefulness than the baptized. But after all, we should do well to remember that spiritual facts require a special mode of investigation, and a special aptitude in those who so investigate; that everything tends to show that spiritual facts all hang together, and are closely correlated: that the condition of original sinfulness in which the child is born is equally hidden from us with that condition of grace in which the child is born again; further, that we may support our faith by the well-known result of one definite act of wilful sin as altering a man's whole life, and also of one deliberate choice of good as shaping his whole career, a single act at a given time does, as a matter of fact, produce constantly a momentous and lasting change; that once more in the rough and ready challenge to comparisons, which seem so fair, but which are in reality

so fallacious, we must at least be careful in the selection of our specimens, and not compare a good Agnostic who is unbaptized, and yet is faithful to that measure of light which is vouchsafed to him, with one who, although baptized, has in act and deed repudiated his obligations, and has added to moral faults spiritual apostasy. It may be unhesitatingly asserted that the goodness of a good man who is baptized, and remains in sacramental union with Christ, will be found to be of a higher type than the goodness of one not so baptized, and simply strong in the moral excellences of a well-regulated nature. The one has, in addition to the other, an endowment of Christian graces which are the direct product of union with Christ. If we are to believe the testimony of the Church, which speaks to us reposing on the revelation of God, the child we receive back from the Font is of inestimable value, with great possibilities open to him, and entitled to our utmost honour and respect. We know how we should feel our responsibility if we were told as we received the infant, 'This child will some day be another Shakespeare,' or 'This child will be the ruler over a vast domain,' or 'This child is the heir to millions of pounds'; but instead of this we are told more important things still, 'This child is a member of Christ; this child is a child of God; this child is an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven'; as such he must be guarded from affinity with everything that is bad; he must be taught to know his parentage, and be instructed in the way of life.

Are, then, these terms rhetorical? Do they simply mean there are religious capabilities in the child, with corresponding religious duties? Or is there a fitness and precision about them which we do well to ponder? For there is a danger about unreal words especially in religion, that they produce a habit of looking upon it as a sentimental and visionary thing, instead of the

precise and definite scheme to which appertain our actual welfare and ultimate salvation. The Church attaches as real a meaning to these terms, 'member of Christ,' 'child of God,' 'inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven,' as we do to 'a future genius,' 'heir to a large property,' or 'a great landowner.'

The child, then, is given back by the Church into the hands of those who are responsible for his after-training, as 'a member of Christ.' Of all three conceptions this is the most difficult to grasp, and it is safe to say that to the majority of people it means nothing but a rhetorical expression for a professed and nominal Christian; and yet it is a title which comes direct from the New Testament,[1] and is further worked out by S. Paul at considerable length in another passage,[2] and is again alluded to in two special places where the same apostle specifically refers to Holy Baptism.[3] The members of the body are the different parts by which the whole man expresses himself, by the imperial power of the will:[4] and the child at Baptism becomes like a limb which, at first useless either by disease or accident, has recovered its proper use; into it through the veins the blood courses once more in freedom and health, it performs its proper functions, and takes its place in the body under the controlling power of the will, as a member or part of Christ. Unless anything intervenes to prevent it, that child will be acting under the guiding and directing power of Christ to carry out a portion of His working, however minute and unimportant it may be. It will make all the difference to that child and it will make all the difference to that portion of life which is brought under his influence, whether or not the motive-power which sways the will

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 15. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 12-27.
[3] Galat. iii. 27; Ephes. v. 30.
[4] See a striking passage on the will in *Memoirs and Letters of Sir James Paget*, pp. 373, 374.

continues to be Christ; roughly speaking, this will determine whether the child as he grows up will become a worker together with God, a promoter of His great plans in glad and willing submission to His will, or whether he will aim at a wrong individualism and look upon life and all its opportunities as only so many occasions of private aggrandisement. If he is a member of Christ, he will say, 'I offer to Thee my body, soul, and spirit, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee.' If, on the other hand, there is a severance from the general life, it becomes a question of 'my powers and the might of mine hand' and the acquisition of wealth, which is the sure prelude to the dread casting forth as an unprofitable branch which ceased to abide in the true vine.[1] To one who is jealously guarding a member of Christ, there is an additional malice in the influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which are the enemies of all true vitality: there is an additional stimulus to the keeping alive of faith, as that which tends to keep him in union with God: and the path of duty becomes the only path of safety, in which access to God may be maintained, and the devious paths of sin avoided into which that life may run away and expend itself, which was once hid with Christ in God.

If, as a member of Christ, the child appeals to us to nourish him, protect him, and develop him, so as the child of God he appeals to us for our especial reverence. It is true that, as S. Paul taught the Athenians out of their own poets, 'We are also His offspring.'[2] It is true that all men may say with the prophet, 'Doubtless Thou art our Father.'[3] For every one who is descended from Adam is the son of God; but the baptized becomes God's child in a special sense, 'being by nature born in sin the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.' And if it be asked in what sense

[1] See S. John xv. [2] Acts xvii. 28. [3] Isa. lxiii. 16.

the child newly baptized is the child of God more than he was before, we may answer, 'By adoption.' 'We are by Baptism brought into this new relation with God, in which we were not by nature.'[1] So we read, 'When we were children, God sent forth His Son that we might receive the adoption of sons.'[2] In the service for Holy Baptism we give thanks to Almighty God, that He has been pleased to regenerate the infant with His Holy Spirit, and to receive him for His own child by adoption. And this is echoed further in the collect for Christmas Day, 'that we being regenerate and made Thy children by adoption and grace.' Here again is another title which has to be rescued from the utter meaninglessness with which familiarity has invested it, and from the unreality which we allow to attach to fair-sounding terms. We must try and translate it once more into the language which is real to us, and which we do to a certain extent understand. It is as if the Church said to us, 'Take this child home and nourish it, for it is a little Prince, his Father is a great potentate Who dearly loves all His children, and has especially desired that this child should be near Him.' It is an appeal to our reverence not only for man as such, but for man as a member of 'the household of faith.' There is a dignity which belongs to little children which Christianity has largely taught us to recognise. The Christian school in our parochial system ranks only second to the parish church; the Font is only second in its sanctity to the Altar. 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not' stands in plaintive opposition to all harsh and worldly systems of education, which would consider little children incapable of appreciating the great truths of our Holy Religion. Reverence for a child of God, while it explains the awful denunciation pronounced against those who offend them, will add a

[1] Isaac Williams, *Plain Sermons*, serm. 278. [2] Galat. iv. 3-5.

fresh impulse to all movements designed to protect them from sin and spiritual harm. There is a conception of child-life which views it as an anxious and perplexing problem in the statistics of national and city life, which leaves education to be paid by the rates, and to be dictated by the caprice of public opinion in an elected board. There is a conception of child-life which views it with interest and anxiety as the stuff out of which future citizens are to be made, the men and women who are to sway the destinies of the State. But there is a higher conception still, which views children as the children of God, baptized children as His special sons, to be cherished and reverenced not for what they may become, but for what they are, not only as those who must be taught, but as those who have much to teach us.

It is a bad sign when a nation displays a diminishing population, if it means that parents no longer see the blessing which attaches to children, or the strength of those arrows in the hand of the giant. It is a bad sign when education becomes a subject of party warfare, if it means that men have forgotten the reverence which is the first duty towards those who appeal to their love and sympathy as the sons of God. Most certainly, instead of being the last thing to be considered, and then made subject to indignity, religion should occupy a prominent place in the teaching of the young, as reminding them of God, of their sonship, and of Him Who claims them for Himself. Much is to be done in reminding the child of what he can claim from a Father Who is Almighty, much can be done in telling him of the wonders of his complex nature, what he may be, and what he can do, and what God is meaning him to be and do in the place which He has assigned to him. The son of God must be taught the power of prayer, that God is more ready to hear than he to pray. He must be taught to trust in God, and that it is wrong to be anxious, how

that all his life through, in great things and in little, he must cast down his care upon God, because God cares for him. He must be taught his own value in his Father's sight, not to listen to the belittling of the slanderer, or the dull despondency of his own indolence. He must learn to aim at great things, and bear hard ones. He must learn the worth of his own soul by contemplating the infinite worth of the Son of God Who redeemed him, and he must learn his capabilities from the ideal which is put before him of being perfect even as his Father is perfect. A low standard awaits him in the world through which he must make his way to God: again and again he will be told that anything else but low aims and low achievements are impossible to his weak nature; but he who has learned the secret of his birth, that he was born to be a king, and that he was made in the image and likeness of God, will throw off this disabling sense of his own impotency, and will confess himself bound by the nobility of his extraction to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called, and to attempt great things as the adopted child of Almighty God.

And the kingdom of Heaven is his inheritance: this too must be put before him as a sure token of his great value in God's sight.

'The Kingdom of Heaven' is a phrase which occurs in the Bible in three different senses. It means the future and eternal kingdom which awaits us after death, or it means the reign of Christ in our hearts, as when He says 'the kingdom of God is within you,'[1] or it means the Church of God upon earth. Of these three meanings, the inheritance here spoken of seems to belong to the first, for we read in the Baptismal Service that we must not doubt but earnestly believe that God will give unto the child the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of His everlasting

[1] S. Luke xvii. 21.

kingdom. And we pray again, in the same service, that the child may be made an heir of everlasting salvation, and that our Lord Jesus Christ would give him the kingdom of Heaven and everlasting life. It would be interesting to note the precise bearing which the promise of this inheritance of everlasting life has on the daily life and conversation of the Christian. It stands forth as a prominent motive in the history of God's people Israel; and those who are scornfully taunted with having no definite conception of a future state are conspicuous as the great example of men who lived in the future, and who went out from home and fatherland and all that men hold dear, declaring plainly that they sought a country, and who died in faith, not having received the promises.[1] Yet how much is the child of God affected by the thought of his future inheritance? Sin brings with it shame, remorse, punishment, pain, and loss: is it also repudiated and thrust away because it might damage the promise of an eternal inheritance and cause the sinner to forfeit Heaven? There are those who would be wiser than God, and reject as unworthy any appeal to right-doing which is based on pains and penalties, or promises of reward as utilitarian and unworthy: who tell us that we ought to pursue good because it is good, and avoid wrong because it is wrong. And yet such reasoning, plausible and even noble as it sounds, proceeds from a very imperfect knowledge of human nature as it is. No one attempts to educate children, who wishes for any success, without some system of rewards and punishments; and mankind, even the best and wisest, are but as children in the hands of the seductive influences which make for evil: while we are in this world we cannot depend on the abstract pursuit of good for its own sake as a sufficient stimulus to its attainment. The extreme difficulty of doing good

[1] Heb. xi. 13, 14, etc.

makes us gladly accept the help of any motive to its performance, short of those which are absolutely bad; we gladly accept 'the terror of the Lord' as a motive to right-doing, and we should accept the promises of the Lord, too, if they were more real to us. The joys of the promised inheritance pale before the joys of actual possession of the good things of the world. Few would have the faith, if the choice was open to them of remaining in the flesh, to choose 'to be with Christ' as far better. And yet this is to be a motive to the child to good living, it should be a motive to every one, that heaven is our inheritance. If this is to be so, surely it will not be brought about by imagination, by hymns descriptive of the beauties of the New Jerusalem, by longings unreal and sentimental for the joys of Paradise, it will be rather by producing here foretastes of Heaven, by sending in spies to bring us out some of the fruit of the good land. He had learned something of this method who said, 'Paradise is but a first Communion which lasts for ever.' We shall make our children realise the richness of their inheritance, and we ourselves shall be able to speak of it as a motive to good living, without insincerity and unreality, if we open up more and more the treasures of Christ's kingdom on earth; for the dividing line between earth and Heaven is not drawn with stern exactitude, they melt into each other; and the joys of Christ's Church on earth are the best incentives to reach out after the fuller and eternal joys of His kingdom in Heaven.

CHAPTER III

RENUNCIATION OF EVIL INFLUENCE

You will find, on fairly thinking of it, that it is his restraint which is honourable to a man, not his liberty.

The child, when he has reached the years of discretion, will become conscious that he has been introduced by his god-parents to three great conceptions with which he will have definite relations all through his life. These are renunciation, faith, and duty.

Of these three, faith and duty are expanded with detail subsequently in the Catechism, and their necessity and difficulty, more especially in the matter of Christian duty, are clearly set forth. But with renunciation there is no such expansion or explanation given; it may be because the mind of childhood is to be drawn away as quickly as possible from even the contempla- of evil, or it may be that while renunciation must always be one of the most difficult things to perform, especially in the matter of foes at once so dangerous and so intimate as those of which the renunciation is demanded, yet faith and the objects of faith, duty and the field of duty, will need more explanation in their bearing on Christian life and allegiance. The object of this chapter is, however, to examine more in detail the promise of renunciation in itself, the principles on which it rests, the objects to which it extends, and the difficulties of its full and proper performance, lest any Christian should be tempted to forget that at his

Baptism he was enlisted as a soldier, and plunged into a battle, the issue of which will be doubtful, and the conflict unceasing, until he lays down his arms in death. It is easy enough to describe these things, they involve few subtleties such as those which are bound up with faith or morals, but the achievement is a lifelong task. Kinglake has told us of our Light Brigade drawn up at Balaclava facing the guns of the enemy at the end of a valley flanked on either side by formidable batteries and menacing squadrons. An aide-de-camp dashes up with an order to Lord Lucan to send his cavalry to charge into the death-trap, with a heroism which might be magnificent but was certainly not war. He hesitates, he questions the order, and receives in reply a contemptuous wave of the hand, and words which stung him, in spite of his better judgment, to order Lord Cardigan to charge: 'There, my Lord, is your enemy; there are your guns.'

So in issuing this order, so complete and so overwhelming, the Church cannot but feel that explanation is almost out of place, it must be done without counting the cost or reckoning up the odds: renunciation of such things as the world, the flesh, and the devil is to open up at once a deadly fire, to surround oneself with foes, and apparently to court destruction. And yet nothing else can be done, as we shall hope to show in the sequel. This stern, unexplained order admits of no mitigations and no compromise, and literally binds the follower of Christ to the terms of his allegiance to his Divine Master, which lay upon him, under penalty of forfeited companionship, the obligation to take up his cross daily and follow Him that was crucified.

I

And here we are struck, first of all, with the severity of the word which is bound upon us. We may avoid

or shrink from or dislike evil, but there is a recklessness of defiance about the word 'renounce' which may well startle a thinking man who believes words to be chosen, one word rather than another, because they mean something which could not otherwise be so fully expressed. 'Renounce' carries with it the idea of a defiant message sent back to an enemy, such as Isaiah inspired by God sent back to the king of Assyria.[1] 'Renounce' reminds us of the worthlessness as against evil of what Bishop Andrewes calls 'the faint virtue' of Lot's wife, who unwillingly left the sights and sounds of Sodom, without renouncing the evils which gathered round them. It reminds us of Balaam, who dexterously conveyed to the messengers of Balak, whose hands were heavy with coveted bribes, that he looked upon apostasy to truth as wrong only in that it was forbidden, not because a true heart abhorred and detested it as an accursed thing; it reminds us of Judas, who gave up all and kept back part of the price, who forsook but did not renounce the evil which came back upon him with such deadly and insidious onslaught.

Certainly the spirit of the present age would seem to shrink from anything quite so pronounced as renunciation of evil. An age which deals in views and opinions, and shudders at the bad taste of a dogmatic expression, is very careful not to hazard an opinion which might seem definite and compromising. Further, no one can read a good deal of the literature of the day without seeing that the curious taste for revivals is at present sedulously studying the Italian Renaissance with a regard to more than the interests of art. We read indeed in a modern life of Fra Filippo Lippi that 'he lived at a time when Art was just beginning to emerge from the churches and cloisters which had guarded her lovingly, together with her sisters, Science and Learning, like a shy and beautiful maiden only

[1] Isa. xxxvii. 21, etc.

half awake and still smiling at the strange dreams of her long sleep, with one foothold on the threshold of the convent and another timidly dipping in the cold, bracing waters of Paganism. Before taking the final plunge, from which she emerged rejuvenated and more beautiful than ever, Art lingered many years among those hallowed walls . . . and showed her gratitude by adorning them with the first manifestations of her reacquired power. . . .'[1] There is a strong feeling that a renunciation of evil breathes the same spirit which forbade the use of the classic masterpieces of literature in education, by reason of the impurities which they contain: that renunciation condemns a man to view life from the window of a convent cell, instead of plunging into the fulness of its enlightenment. Neither in art, nor in literature, nor in morals, nor in social behaviour, shall we find much favour shown to-day to the spirit of 'renunciation.'

Evil certainly has made great strides by pulling down the barrier between right and wrong, and carrying on so much of its operations in the borderland of the doubtful. How can a man, for instance, who attaches any sort of meaning to words, regard it as compatible with his baptismal vow to study or take pleasure in the strong situations, as they are called, of a problem-novel? It may be the painful duty of certain casuists or moralists or even psychological students to study these things in the interests of mankind; but a surgeon who is making delicate experiments does not admit a crowd of gaping seekers after sensation to his theatre, nor does he publish in fascinating guise for the benefit of the world the mysteries of his medical research. He does not invite those whom he would warn from the dangers of typhus to study the evil effects of bad drainage by hanging over a sewer. How many of those who read the modern situation-novel, or who throng the theatre

[1] G. C. Strutt, *Fra Filippo Lippi*, pp. 2, 3.

to witness a problem-play, are of those who wish to study evil with a view to its extirpation, with hatred and dread? Is there not rather a direct evil subtly developing itself from the habituation with evil, in the lowered moral tone, in the deadly poison of the infected air? It may be only long after, in all the misery of a polluted memory, and in the agony of a shattered moral life, that the soul recognises the wisdom of a promise which exacted a complete standing aside from the infected area, an isolation of the healthy from the diseased, an avoiding of germs of fever which plentifully infest certain spots of danger. Men noted and dreaded the deadly malaria which attacked the dwellers in the marsh; they did not know until recently that immunity was to be obtained by keeping entirely excluded from their dwelling the poisonous insect which inoculated the sufferer with its germs. All medical science tends towards the keeping away of germs and microbes from the healthy organism. It is but an extension of the same principle to the higher regions of life, when the Church says 'renounce' the evil, which may not be simply avoided or disliked, but which must be altogether kept away from the soul in which irreparable mischief may be set up by the venomous gnat of an evil suggestion.

'Renunciation,' however, will not be a popular word in a generation whose most crying defect is want of seriousness. Unsectarian religion, which has been the evil creation of the present age, speedily craves as its complement an enlightened system of cosmopolitan morality. It has been proclaimed to be a mistake sedulously fostered by priests and bigots to claim for any one form of religion a greater or less possession of the truth than belongs to any other. Creeds and warning clauses have been proclaimed to be a mistake, and true religion to be a precipitate thrown off from all forms and systems in which the heart feels out for

the Unknowable, and for a general sanction for a moral life. With a religious system such as this, it is not wonderful that morality has also been broadened and, so to speak, catholicised. Who will deny the beautiful moral basis which underlay ancient Paganism? Who will deny the strict moral rectitude which in certain ways animates many of those who profess no religion? No one is concerned to maintain that Islam is utterly devoid of moral beauty, or that even the code of honour which belongs to a man of the world is worthless. But it is another thing to seek to dignify a religion of nature, so called, as a beautiful expansion of the perfection of human life. It is a different thing to take as a working principle, that various grades of society may well have their varying moral standards, or that what is disgraceful in a woman is tolerable in a man. It is not to be admitted for one moment that one set of moral rules may run in India, and another in England; or that, as in unsectarian religion, so in morality there can be a residuum from all moral systems which shall be the standard for all those who are admitted to society; and that it shall not be allowed as a condition of obtaining social favour or fashionable recognition that any code of morality distinctive of any religious sect shall be ostentatiously displayed. It is a great thing to see good in everybody, for one who is himself good. But goodness is not to be attained by a polite compliance with all those moral customs to which no man of the world has any objection.

We can see a trace of the spirit which would reject any principle of renunciation in a good many of the utterances which have to do with 'war.' There can be no sort of doubt that an unjust war, a war of pride or aggression or ambition, is wrong and deplorable. But it is difficult to see how, in certain cases, a Christian nation could refuse to go to war without a dereliction

of duty. On the one hand are all the miseries, sorrows, and degradations of war; on the other is the upholding of justice, international rights, or even those principles on which the stability of the world is based. No self-respecting nation could for one moment put aside the claims of justice in view of the horrors of war, any more than a judge could refuse to pronounce sentence on a criminal, albeit he knows that it may mean blackened homesteads, party feuds, bloodshed, and perhaps his own assassination. The apparent gentleness which tells us not to judge others, the apparent charity which tells us not to condemn the ways of good people, whom we do not understand, by our aloofness, may very easily come under the condemnation of those who do 'not abhor anything that is evil.'

'Renunciation' means protest as well as avoidance, and a man who simply shuns what is evil for his own health's sake, and in view of his own salvation, and yet neglects his protest, has not practised to the full his renunciation. The vendors of evil trade on the supineness of the good. They point to art and ancient Paganism in its beauty, they talk of nature, and physical development, of culture, a widened outlook and a liberal estimate of life. And the simple man with his straitened morality is afraid to make his protest, and the fabric of society totters by reason of the withdrawal of support by those who were meant to steady it. An easy-going age deals in comprehension, compromise, and that which causes no dispute; the Church, on the other hand, proclaims and binds on her children renunciation, opposition, protest, and all which the apostle felt able to summarise in his pregnant expression, as 'the offence of the cross.'

II

Three enemies are specified as the objects of this renunciation. These have been already considered at some length in the first volume of this series,[1] both in themselves and in what they indicate; it would be more convenient, therefore, in this place to endeavour to show how their methods of attack are most fully met by the attitude which is summed up in the word 'renounce'; to show if we may the peculiar malignity and deep-seated power for evil which make compromise impossible, and all half-measures quite inadequate in meeting an attack at once so well organised, persistent, and deadly.

It may be said with certainty that no one yet has succeeded in escaping without serious loss who has attempted to make terms with the devil. He is always exhibited in Holy Scripture as exceedingly clever as well as powerful; indeed, our Blessed Lord in His well-known parable seems to direct the attention of the children of light to the better organised wisdom of the children of this world. On another occasion He warned His too-confident apostle, that the process which was to try him and his fellow-apostles was analogous to the sifting of wheat; and His own attitude in the wilderness towards the Tempter was by no means the attitude of One Who despised and temporised, but of One Who had gathered Himself up for a very real encounter with a very serious foe. And a little consideration will show that the modes of attack adopted by the devil more than anything else necessitate the precise attitude of resistance here bound upon the newly baptized Christian by a solemn pledge.

The devil makes his first assault on the will; knowing that he can only gain entrance by admission, he tries

[1] See Author's *Religion*, pp. 125-176.

by ways, direct and indirect, to master the will, so that it shall move under his guidance and carry out his policy. And here he especially uses those powers which have given him the pre-eminent title of 'the father of lies.' 'Yea, hath God said?' 'Command that these stones be made bread'; 'Cast Thyself down'; 'Fall down and worship me,' in the different modifications in which they are presented to different men, are direct contraventions of the policy hitherto pursued by the enlightened will; each has its appropriate inducement and its rational justification, as the will is urged towards acceptance or goaded into compromise. It is in this region that the skill of devilry is made most manifest. It is not only the ordinary moral fool who is taken in by the tales of the wandering pedlar to exchange his magical treasure, because it seems to be old, for others which are new and yet worthless in spite of their attractiveness; but the good man, the earnest man, falls a victim also to the cunning craftiness whereby the adversary lies in wait to deceive. Many have received their first impetus towards deterioration because they believed themselves already to be compromised by suggestions, which really came from without, which they thought to be evil imaginations which came from within. The will is forced almost without knowing it to accept suggestions whose origin it has failed to detect; and hence come that deadly brood of scruples which are the perplexity of those who have to deal with the guidance of souls; scruples which strike a heavy blow against Christian joy and Christian contentment. If the joy of the Lord is our strength, the gloom of Satan is our weakness. The joy of Heaven uplifts, but the sorrow of the world worketh death; for gloom and spiritual depression, a sense of failure and guilt, if they are once set up within the soul, become a veritable seed-bed of evil.

We are familiar with this state in the mind of a man

who has persuaded himself that he only does good from wrong motives, that all that he does is therefore wrong, and that it is useless therefore to continue his good courses when the whole of his motives are vitiated. The man at last begins to doubt his own identity, he takes the voice of another to be his voice, the suggestions imputed to him as his own motives, to proceed from himself, and his own actions to be the precise opposite of what he took them to be. Any one may see, in the case of one in whom the devil has contrived so to implant his scruples, what a veritable reign of terror is set up ; how he works upon tendencies to sin to produce hopelessness, how he construes momentary concessions into downright surrender, and goads the man on into a final submission of the will. To consider these things is the better to understand the heartfelt words of Zacharias when he sings his song of thankfulness, 'that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear.'[1] It is just this fear which stands out so prominently in more than one place of Holy Scripture as an integral part, not only of the misery, but also of the danger involved in Satan's attacks.

We may now see more clearly how renunciation is the true way of dealing with him in his wily onslaught. In ordinary temptations which beset the man in his daily life, it is all-important that he should keep the enemy from the citadel where sits the imperial will. He must make it a rule to fight the battle in the outer regions of suggestion, to hurl back the temptation when it is just presented to him, and not welcome it in within the first lines of his defence, with a desire that half yields as it fights, which is engaged in reckoning up the advantages, or even the pleasures of being tempted, while ostensibly it is repelling the attack. There is only one end to this, as a general rule,—if the mind

[1] S. Luke i. 74.

has once accepted the idea that the forbidden fruit is a tree to be desired to make one wise, the putting forth the hand to pluck the fruit is only a question of time and detail, when the will has been subdued to sin. It is equally true in the more subtle temptations indicated above, that the only chance of successfully resisting Satan is to renounce him at the outset. If we once realise that we are dealing with a person, and not a subtle unknown tendency, we shall know that we are only undergoing a common experience which belongs to everyday life. We are familiar with the detractor, the unfriendly critic, or even one who simply practises annoyance as his method of doing injury. The boy at school is familiar with the idler who tries to stop his work by imputing unworthy motives as the cause, either a desire for praise or distinction, or a wish to curry favour with those in authority, and the like, and he knows how to treat the suggestion. The public man knows well enough the methods of the interested and disreputable opponent, who tries to stop his career by the imputation of motives both unworthy of the man and discreditable to his cause: he again knows how to deal with them. No one in his senses would listen to the partisan accusations of the professional controversialist, or turn by one hair's breadth from his purpose by reason of the calumnious accusations which are the stock-in-trade of the so-called religious agitator. So with the attacks made on the soul, they must be hurled back in the same fearless manner. For this craving for self-satisfaction in all that we do may after all be referrible to a higher sort of pride, which wishes for the gratification which comes from the sense of the highest motives in every action. Constituted as we are, we must often be thankful that we are able to do what is right from any motive whatever, even if they be very short of the highest.

Satan must be resolutely resisted when he suggests

that, unless we can please ourselves in doing good, we had better not do good at all, like an artist who refuses to work for fear of criticism, or one who will not use the talents which he has because he does not possess those talents which have been denied to him. The man who does his best, knowing it not to be the highest, is of more value than he who will not work at all because he cannot satisfy his own conceptions of what his work ought to be.

Whether they come in the form of a rude assault, like the spring of the lion, or whether they come in the subtle region of scruples and doubtfulness, as secret and deadly as the crafty devices of the serpent, the assaults of Satan must equally be renounced.

Many a man who is buffeted by temptation must have asked himself how these attacks, so painful and persistent, are best to be met. And if he studies the record of our Blessed Lord's temptation in the wilderness, he will there see how renunciation plays the principal part in the defeat and rout of the enemy. With our Blessed Lord all temptation was external, there was no sinful principle within, no evil desire which came forth to meet the temptation. But still He kept at bay the suggestion which could effect no foothold in the spotless soul, or capture the absolutely inflexible human will. Much more, then, is this a necessity with us, where there is so much sympathy with evil, such a paralysing weakness, and such infirmity of purpose, to keep Satan back and in meeting temptation, to make this our first care to repudiate the suggestion and renounce the tempter. The lives of the saints are full of quaint encounters with the Evil One ; there may be more reality about these than we sometimes care to believe. The ancient ceremonies of renunciation in the Baptismal services are also very suggestive, and indicate that to depart from evil is the first step towards attaining to good. The order in the Baptismal vows follows the

same course: first renounce, then believe, then do. So when Satan is repudiated, then the will may certainly need to be strengthened by falling back on the Divine aid, and the path of rectitude may only be attainable by the grace of God working with and confirming the resolution which has spurned the evil and chosen the good, with a firmness which knows no forebodings, and a determination which has rejected all compromise.

It is necessary to notice further that in the terms of the renunciation are included not only the devil, but also 'all his works.' It might be supposed that this was a tautological expression for all sinful actions, but this is hardly likely in view of the further division of evil agencies which follow. It would rather seem to glance at those especial works which are characteristic of a fallen spirit, spiritual sins with all their subtle malignity and peculiar danger. The most notable of these would be pride running on into presumption; falsehood, the peculiar characteristic of the father of lies; hatred of good and a desire to hear evil, to do evil and to promote evil, which is so notable in those who have abandoned themselves to evil courses. Envy and malice, and all forms of such sins as militate against the law of love, might once more be classified as spiritual sins, and as part of the especial works of the devil. Certainly those who have escaped from lower developments of evil suggestion have reason to look with anxiety at forms of sin often unreprobated, sometimes even praised, but which yet take rank as the peculiar and appropriate works of the enemy of mankind.

The second enemy who must be renounced is the World. And this is a foe which is particularly slow in declaring itself, and whose precise position it is difficult to fix. Once more we must refer our readers to the first volume of this series for an attempt to gauge the force of this deadly onslaught, and to fix the limits of

its influence. In this chapter we are engaged in looking at the nature of the resistance to be offered and the character of the defence, as embodied in the words of the pledge twice made at solemn crises in life, that whatever the World might mean to us, in whatever shape it might come, our attitude would be one of absolute renunciation. Certainly the World is like a foe who fights disguised in the uniform of a friendly power, there is nothing in its assaults to suggest renunciation, but much to urge cordial co-operation, so that the terms of our resistance are curiously emphasised in view of the deceitful guise in which it approaches. We must learn not to be taken in by a pomp, that long procession of treasure-bearing slaves which the World displays to us as it approaches; we must learn to weigh its gifts, and understand the value of things, which those who know cast away into the worthless dustheap of vanity.

We have an example of the resistance to be offered to the World, as for the moment it affected his teaching, in the words and actions of the great apostle of the Gentiles. In speaking to the Galatian Judaisers he says in effect: 'For myself, God forbid I should glory in anything save in the cross of Christ. On that cross I have been crucified to the World, and the World has been crucified to me. Henceforth we are dead each to the other. In Christ Jesus old things have passed away. Circumcision is not, and uncircumcision is not. All external distinctions have vanished. The new spiritual creation is all in all.'[1] For the World is everywhere, it dresses up in the uniform of religion just as readily as in the spangled cloak of voluptuousness, and its assault may be delivered under the guise of religious zeal just as effectually as in the vain seduction of social gaiety. It is startling to listen to the impassioned emphasis with which S. Paul appeals

[1] Bishop Lightfoot on Galat. vi. 14.

to the cross as his only refuge in a contest of peculiar deadliness. For it is only in the cross that we shall be able to renounce the World. This is our Lord's own summary, not only of a burden which He was constrained to lay upon His followers, but also of the grace which would flow from that burden. And so S. Paul uses it as a summary of Christian life and teaching, he adopts it as an attitude, and assumes it as a defence. When he speaks of the cross, his mind has passed far away from the mere material symbol; he means more than a tragic incident in the past, he refers to a living system, which makes demands upon him, and regulates his attitude towards God and holy things on the one hand, and towards all external life on the other. And we can trace in the eagerness of S. Paul, his emphatic language and indignant remonstrance as he writes his letter to the Galatians, how keenly he felt the pressure of the dangerous foe. He thrusts the cross forward, he brandishes it in the face of his opponents, because he is confronted with the old enemy the World, never so dangerous as when it masquerades in the garb of religion.

Christianity then, as now, was unpopular; then as now there were people who would take selections out of its teaching and weave them into whatsoever form of religion happened to be fashionable at the time, while they disliked it as a whole. In Galatia, for instance, the Jews resented the religion of the cross because it abolished their Mosaic rites, and therefore nothing could be easier for those who disliked serious trouble than to take a selection out of Christianity and make it a graceful appendage to Judaism, leaving out its stern aspects, its exclusiveness, and severity; so it would be easy to pass as a good Jew and a fair Christian, to upset nobody, and trample on no man's prejudices, and so get the good out of each form of religion. But S. Paul would not allow this for one moment.

Christianity could never be a tolerated religion at the price of its integrity. Again and again it might have been admitted as a *religio licita* in the Empire, had it agreed to renounce its claim to be an absolute religion, and its right to supplant all others. S. Paul knows how to classify this at once: it is the World following out its own peculiar cult, it is the World which disbelieves in anything stronger than a view or an opinion, which shudders at a definite statement as a display of bad taste. Let all, it would say, be mixed up together, the best in Judaism and the best in Christianity, and do not let us push to an extreme the unpalatable doctrines which offend our common sense of religion. But this will not satisfy S. Paul: 'Zeal in conciliating public opinion?' he would say, 'I know of no such thing. I have only one thing to be proud of, and that is the cross of Christ. By means of it I can shrink from the World as if it were a crucified abhorrent thing, and the World dreads me as if I were a creature of shame, and cursed with the ban of one who hangs upon the tree.'

This is, perhaps, the most deadly form of the World's assault, and renunciation is the only way to resist it. It is a serious matter when we find an enemy disguised as a friend in the very citadel of our life; and the World disguised in the garb of religion is able the easier to destroy principle and methods of resistance which a more open onslaught would have failed to dislodge. This method of attack is being delivered at this present moment with consummate skill. There is much in Christianity which every one will admit to be beautiful and fascinating. No one can deny that it has shaped and coloured civilisation itself; but there is also much which is stern and distasteful, and which makes large demands on faith and conduct. What is easier than to excerpt the glorious precepts of Christianity, its simple morality, its human kindliness, and to put on

one side all that may give offence? Christianity without the miraculous element, without the supernatural claims, Christ of the Gospels, in the simple idyl of Nazareth, without the dogma of the Epistles, or, worse still, of the Councils. Let us set up Christ as an example of pure morality, instead of a fountain of supernatural grace, and then all will accept Him, and conflict will cease, offence and prejudice will die away, and no earnest man be alienated. But the Christian who is true to his promise has only one answer, 'I renounce'—'God forbid.' The cross of Christ, the offence of the cross, that which separates off the Church and the World, is the only thing worth contending for, the only thing worth preserving. 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.' Why? For two reasons, because the cross represents a system, and because it represents power. Without either of these we should be helpless in the hands of a foe such as is the world.

The cross represents first of all a system: a system which could not be broken without serious damage to its integrity and proportion. To take out the cross from Christianity is to take away the essential element in the scheme of salvation as the Church has received it. And to say that the Gospel is in the Sermon on the Mount rather than in the mystery of Calvary, is to labour under a fatal misapprehension. Redemption is something done for us, not something told to us; salvation more than reformation is the need of the world. And yet this is the point where the World as we know it delivers its most serious attack. The World will receive Christ as a Reformer but not as a Saviour. The offence of the cross is very strong still, and finds its expression in the dislike to the claims and obligations set up by

Christianity. The World sets itself to reduce religion to the dimensions of a small chapel in a magnificently furnished house. It too may be beautiful, but it is very small. Here we may go to elevate our feelings and cultivate a higher æstheticism at certain well-defined moments in life. But let there be none of the uncouth asceticism which is connoted by the cross, intruding out of its place with its gaunt outline and dreary shadows. The religion of the World is graceful and pliant, not stern and angular.

But this gospel, which is no gospel, can only be sent back, returned with courageous refusal in the power of the cross. The cross is the golden reed by which we measure the city of God.[1] Its shame, and anguish, and lingering struggle mark out the true outlines of the life which is lived by the grace of the Son of God. Here is a system which is a perpetual protest against an easy-going life decorated with solemn sentiments and flowered with terms of piety. It means a stern expiation, a vigorous warfare, a consistent exhibition of a crucified life, in which a man shrinks back from that heartless nonentity known as the World as he would shrink from a crucified malefactor, and in the strength of which he does not fear if he finds himself an object of scorn, as he is gibbeted as pious, or shunned as unsociable, or disliked as a living protest.

And even more does the cross represent to us power. S. Paul, when he breaks forth in his impassioned cry, speaks as one who had found much more than an appendage to Judaism. He had found in Christianity, that which Judaism had not, power against the malice and malignity of sin. The Law had brought to him the knowledge of sin, its sacrifices had shown its awful power and the complete exhaustion of the wrath of God against all defilement, which yet they were powerless to remove; here was a religion which offered power

[1] Rev. xxi. 15.

and grace flowing from a crucified Saviour. 'The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' No wonder the apostle refused to banish this religion of power as if it were a thing immaterial. We cannot put the clock of the world back, and become again as the Jew, neither can we be persuaded simply by the fascination of good into the avoidance of what is evil. The World's most dangerous attack on our religious life must be met by the same simple renunciation which breathes through the rejection of S. Paul, and all tampering with our privileges must be hurled back with a simple 'God forbid.'

The horizon of the World is low, the outlook narrow, but its creed is fenced with anathema, and bristles with damnatory clauses. To resist the claims of society, to go against the prevailing fashion of the hour, requires from a man a serious appeal to the obligation of his promised renunciation. There are some people who fear being cast out of the smart set, more than they fear being cast out of Heaven. There are some who will condone any iniquity if it be fashionable, and shrink from even apostolic goodness if it seem to be vulgar.

The World with its strange creed, its ritual of fashion, its morality of expediency, with all its powers of excommunication from its circle, and its compact band of adoring worshippers, is a serious enemy which has to be met, and can only be met effectually by complete renunciation.

There yet remains a third enemy who is included in the stern attitude demanded by the Baptismal promise, and that is 'The Flesh.'[1]

In this region, if anywhere, the prudent man will realise that any attitude short of renunciation would be quite inadequate. It has been already pointed out that

[1] For a fuller examination of this subject, see Author's *Religion*, chap. viii.

'there is no detailed exposition given subsequently in the Catechism of the first obligation as there is of the second and third.'[1] Is this a counsel of prudence, or the shrinking of timidity? Various answers would be given to this question, or rather to the alternative policy suggested by this question, at the present day. There are some who shrink with their whole heart from a possible breaking down of innocency which comes from the knowledge of evil. It seems to them like an inoculation with the germ of the plague, as against the attack of the contagion of the plague itself; and they shrink from the inevitable fever which will be caused, and the suffering which, if comparatively slight, is almost certain to ensue. They are told that ignorance and innocency are not the same thing. But, in the first place, ignorance of evil must in nearly every case have been won by the deliberate suppression of evil curiosity, and the avoidance of bad company, bad literature, and evil cravings. Ignorance of evil is by no means confined to gentle girls brought up in homes where every tainted breath is carefully kept away from them, but is also, if not common, certainly not unknown among boys and youths who have passed a long way through the trials of a public school. Ignorance of evil may very well be able to lay claim to some, perhaps to a great deal, of the beauty of innocence, if that ignorance has been brought about and preserved by keeping from the way of the destroyer. And man being what he is, it is almost impossible that knowledge of evil should simply remain under lock and key in the poison chest of the mind, as information only to be used for prophylactic purposes, under the absolute control of the will, which knows the how, the when, the how much, and all the minute dispensing of a dangerous drug. There are times when the will is weak and imagination is strong. There are moments

[1] Robinson, *Church Catechism Explained*, p. 29.

when the key of that chest seems to have passed into the hands of the enemy, and the brightest things become poisoned, and a fierce conflict is aroused between will and passion. There is war in Heaven, resulting from the presence of evil which has to be cast out, an evil which once admitted will never cease to make its presence felt.

Who has not known the haunting depreciation of some parody, which fastens itself upon the beautiful rhythm of a well-loved poem, or the criticism unjust and unlovely which yet intrudes itself into our appreciation of a work of art? And we say to the parodist and the critic, 'I wish you had never told me.' There it remains as a blot on our enjoyment, a ciphering note in the organ symphony which we cannot ignore or forget. Innocence is such a beautiful thing, so easily shattered and so completely irrecoverable, that we may well hesitate before we even run the risk of breaking it in a single soul. Wordsworth's matchless lines addressed to the child now six years old may well be transferred to innocence itself.

> Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
> Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
> Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
> A gem that glitters while it lives,
> And no forewarning gives;
> But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
> Slips in a moment out of life.[1]

But, on the other hand, there are those who say that innocence is too tender a thing to be launched forth into this rough world. The disillusion must come sooner or later. It is better that it should be done wisely by friends, with a good object in view, than recklessly by enemies, who only seek to destroy. At the worst it may be doing a little evil that good may come, at the best it is giving innocence the protection

[1] Wordsworth to 'H. C., six years old.'

which comes from a proper forewarning, and elevating ignorance of evil into the deliberate rejection of that which is known only to be hated, and indicated only to be shunned. It is a question as to which much may be said on both sides.

But perhaps older people, on whom the knowledge of evil has been forced in many ways, would do well to imitate the reticence of the Church Catechism in this, that such knowledge, if it is to be imparted, is not the fit subject for books or catechisms. These are open to all, and may fall on dangerous matter and precipitate evil just as easily as they light upon the tender heart and warn it from danger. These things are the subjects rather of individual counsel, subjects to be dealt with tenderly and discreetly by parents and clergy who know something of those whom they have to warn.[1] Nothing can be more revolting than to see such themes scattered broadcast without reserve by those who trade on pruriency in the name of religion for the sake of gain. But also great harm may be done by those who, with the best motives, publish warnings which are lacking in reserve, or which tend to pull down that modesty which they hope to preserve.

There is no doubt that 'The Flesh' represents a very citadel of Satan, a tower of Antonia which dominates the temple of God, because it represents a perversion of human nature in its most intimate and sacred shrine. Here is a hostile occupation of all those instincts which have to do with the mystery of life. Sloth paralyses its activities; drunkenness and gluttony prevent its repair; lust fastens on its transmission; and therefore merely to represent the attacks of the Flesh as the invitation to excess addressed to natural appetite is to misconceive the whole position. The Flesh represents

[1] See a paper entitled 'Chastity,' by Rev. G. E. Jelf, Canon of Rochester, *White Cross League Papers*, 1901.

an utter perversion in principle, of that which God designed for the highest ends. This may be seen best in the case of the glutton. God gave him the appetite for food that he might grow thereby, that he might be induced to eat in order that he might live. Under the influence of Satan he perverts this instinct, and lives to eat. The appetite is used for the appetite's sake, not for an end beyond itself, and speedily the intellectual refinement and the spiritual insight go. The Flesh is on the throne, and intellect and spirit, if possible, must work for it, not it for the higher reason enthroned within, anointed by the Spirit of God.

So easily and so imperceptibly does this perversion take place that the only possible attitude to ensure success is renunciation. All the beginnings of appeal to appetite must be resisted, the terrible affinity of the desire within to what is evil must be reckoned with. Any dwelling on appetite for appetite's sake must be resisted. The *gourmand* who chooses the particular joint he is going to eat, who minutely follows its preparation, who whets his appetite in every possible way, and bends his whole mind to enjoy, as he says, what he eats, is typical of all who in any way follow perverted instincts. He who would keep to the spirit of this promise must resolutely set his face against all that appeals to appetite or passion as such, and fix his eye on the life which is more than meat, and that true living which is not to be brought about by mere bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The spirit of this pledge binds us to renounce all appeal to appetite or passion in itself.

If this be so there must be a firm and uncompromising resistance to a sinister return to Paganism, under the guise of the cultivation of nature, with the artist and poet as its priests, and the theatre as its temple. Nature as regenerated in Christ, not the nature

which satisfied the heathen world, is the only form which a Christian can aim at. There is a seamy side to this modern renaissance, no less than there was to the renaissance of the sixteenth century, and the semi-paganism of the eighteenth. True manliness, healthy imagination, noble aims, and the abiding sense of the presence of the King of Glory are the best correctives to much that is sickly and morbid in our modern civilisation. No beauty of form can compensate for anything which suggests evil. No intricate development of a subtle plot, or the working out of a complicated problem, can redeem what is inwardly foul from its moral ugliness, or restore the power of edification to that which is inwardly unsound and deadly. Evil, as we have seen, flourishes in the low marsh-land which lies between the mountains of integrity and the burning plains of sin. Here and there a man may escape, whom duty or love for another's soul has brought into this deadly region, but the way of escape for the generality of mankind is through utter and complete renunciation.

CHAPTER IV

OBLIGATION

For whether in one or other form (*i.e.* of faith) there is rest and peacefulness, the 'standing still' in both, the quietness of action determined, of spirit unalarmed, of expectation unimpatient: beautiful even when based only, as of old, on the self-command and self-possession, the persistent dignity or the uncalculating love, of the creatures; but more beautiful yet when the rest is one of humility instead of pride, and the trust no more in the resolution we have taken, but in the hand we hold.

Ἄγου δέ με . . .
ὅποι ποθ' ὑμῖν εἰμὶ διατεταγμένος,
ὡς ἕψομαι γ' ἄοκνος· ἢν δὲ μὴ θέλω
κακὸς γενόμενος οὐδὲν ἧττον ἕψομαι.

It is a common misconception of the true meaning of the rite of Confirmation which represents it as the time when children take upon themselves their Baptismal vows hitherto made for them by others. It is a view of Confirmation which fits in with that subjective conception of Christianity which never loses sight of the man in his impressionable nature, his need of edification and moral instruction, and which has largely forsaken God and the operations of His grace towards us. This shutting of the eyes to the Godward side of the Church ordinance is a strange comment on that aspect of religion, which makes its boast in excluding anything and everything which might come between man and God. Here it should be noticed that the

Catechism opportunely reminds us of the terms of the Baptismal promises, that they were made by the sponsors only until the children came of age to take them upon themselves. And accordingly, every time the child says this part of the Catechism, he openly with his own mouth and consent ratifies and confirms his promises, saying in answer to the question which tests his sense of obligation to that which was done in his name, 'Yes, verily; and by God's help so I will.' Every time the child says his Catechism, and not for the first time during the service of Confirmation, he takes upon himself, or rather renews, the solemn promises and vows made in his name at his Baptism.

But this question and answer introduce us to a far wider question than that of the Baptismal vows and their renewal, wide as that question is. They introduce us to a very solemn term which was meant to dominate our moral life, known as obligation; a term which opposes 'because I ought' to 'because I like,' and which represents to us the stern outline of duty, cutting right across the indefinite wavy line which indicates the capricious and uncertain government of like and dislike. Man in a kingdom of Law is subject to natural laws, which he is bound to obey or suffer for his disobedience: he is also under the dominion of moral and spiritual laws equally exacting and severe. At Baptism these moral and spiritual laws are presented by the Church, in a codified and intelligible form, for the adhesion of him who is about to pass through a world where he will be daily tempted to forget them, and to mistake the liberty of the child of God for a licence to do wrong and forsake the path of duty. We have seen in the last chapter how his attitude towards certain well-defined enemies, grouped under the banners of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, is clearly and unmistakably marked out. He must make no alliance with Syria, however powerful

Syria may seem, or do a little evil to secure a great good. He must not go down into Egypt to multiply horses; to do good in a way which pleases the world may command instant and wide popularity, but it offends God, and ends in disaster and defeat. Edom, our brother and our congenital foe, can never be trusted with his offer of help and his appeal to nature. The child of God passes through the midst of these foes in safety, only on one condition, that he remembers to maintain his pledged attitude towards them. He can no more ignore with impunity the laws which regulate his conduct, than he can ignore the laws of gravitation in descending from a height, or the laws of health in regulating his diet, or the laws of business in the daily transactions of his life. He is a man under authority having soldiers under him. It is only as he recognises the obligation of the moral and spiritual laws of God to which he is pledged that he can govern the rebellious and vigorous powers which march under the banner of and own allegiance to his will. We shall have to see in subsequent chapters, that not even the empire of the mind is free from obligation: there are laws of Thought and there are laws of Faith. There are some regions where speculation is barred, at least, as to conclusions, if it be permitted in investigating the premises. We shall see further how all our life is hedged round by law reaching right up into the region of thought and motive, and how 'Thou shalt' is only possible to him who has carefully studied the limits of 'Thou shalt not.'

The whole life of a Christian is under obligation. He is bound to believe and to do those things which were undertaken for him, not as an arbitrary imposition, but as the necessary obligation of the laws of life, without which a true conversation would be impossible.

It needs no depth of observation to see, as has been stated above, that there is a general unloosing at the

present time of the bands of obligation. In the relations of a man to his God, to himself, and to his neighbours, new sanctions of morality seem to be springing up. God must justify His commands to man before they can obtain his ready obedience. The Church's days of obligation, of fast or festival, are held to be of obligation only in this sense, that they fit in with health, or instruction, or improvement, and generally render themselves agreeable to the prevailing law of public opinion. Children obey their parents if they can command obedience, and respect them if they seem worthy of respect, and not otherwise. Parents love their children if they are lovable, and look after their interests if they do not conflict with their own, and not otherwise. Restraint, reproof, much more coercion in any region are repulsive terms. Men have turned their backs on Hell, it is unworthy of a free man to be frightened into being good; they do not look at Heaven, it is mercenary to be coaxed by prizes. 'I will,' 'I like,' 'I choose,' these are the verbs most in use in the new grammar of religion. 'I must,' 'I ought' are obsolete forms suitable only to a religious dialect which has long since passed away and become inoperative. Yet still failure and disaster, broken lives, society out of joint, failure of ideals, and a general *impasse*, show us that God's laws never alter, and that if a man refuse to own his obligation by assent, he is sooner or later bound to confess his obligation by failure.

I

'Dost thou not think that thou art bound?' Many valuable lives are lost for want of a little thought. Many souls are wandering in the paths of self-pleasing because they have not stopped to think that a path so beset with guidance and warning must needs be marked

out with great strictness and hemmed in by the most severe obligation.

The sense of obligation will only become apparent to those who think. Renunciation of evil, faith in God, readiness to do, are only details of a permanent attitude in which the soul stands to the Divine Will which called it into being, endowed it, and adapted it to fulfil a certain function in a vast scheme. The world rolls on, its treasures are ransacked, its resources developed. There it is in its main features unchanged, in its details ceaselessly changing. Generation after generation leaves its impress upon it, life after life appears and does its work and disappears, to be succeeded by another and yet another. Great events are worked out through centuries of national life. Judaism, through Patriarch, Law, and Prophet, bears its one great flower in the Incarnation, and as a system passes away. Generation succeeds generation, and gradually with pain and difficulty, and after great effort, the growth of Christian principles produces the true idea of the dignity of man, and slavery dies away. Wars of rapine and aggression disappear painfully and slowly in the same way. Gigantic evils still remain to be dislodged, powers of good still remain to be developed. The world becomes fuller and fuller of workmen, and the plan of God becomes more and more developed; and it is into this world that new labourers are ever entering, stepping into rank, where their predecessors have fallen down, pressing on where the work seemed likely to flag, entering into the labours of those who worked and were not allowed to finish.

To the thoughtful man, to the man who looks round him and thinks, there dawns at once the idea of an obligation deeper and more commanding than the obligation to any specific duty. It is the obligation of position, the obligation which comes to him because he lives at one precise moment in the world's history, and

occupies one especial position, and commands one set of tools, and faces one set of obstacles and one particular detail in the world's plan. Here is an obligation which lies at the bottom of all life-work, the obligation to stay where we are and work at what lies before us, and carry out the details which God has committed to our especial care. We are face to face with a restlessness which ignores this obligation. Women are leaving the particular excellence of womanhood and striving to be men in a zealous rivalry of peculiar excellences which are not theirs. We see it in the art and literature of the day, in the Madonna of the modern artist, who escapes as far as possible from the conception of Divine motherhood, to the sadness of the speculator perplexed with the problem of modern life. We see it in daily life in the competition with men in their follies, their pursuits, their very vices. And so man and woman cease to be the complement, the one to the other, because they have lost sight of the obligation which God has imposed upon their lives.

We see the same restlessness in religion. A man who has been brought up in an imperfect form of religion, who has been deprived of those privileges which might have been his, may well turn in answer to God's grace to higher calls of richer and fuller promise. He may feel that where he is, he is even imperilling his salvation, and that to refuse to answer to God would be moral suicide. But it is a very different thing for one who has been nourished and brought up in the full light of God's truth to give way to a spiritual valetudinarianism and an impatient desire for change. Many people have been led to doubt and even forsake the church of their youth, because somebody has whispered to them that it does not show on the face of it that it belongs to the Catholic Church. And a partisan who can accept the career of Alexander VI., the massacre of S. Bartholomew, and the Gun-

powder Plot, is able to unsettle the stedfastness which should have grown with years of sacramental nourishment, by the satirical criticism of a bishop's ephemeral charge. There is a flippancy of argument and a recklessness in changing the convictions of a lifetime which bear witness to the same absence of a sense of obligation in those who change their religious principles as easily as they would change their coat. To find oneself placed by God in a certain position in life is *a priori* a reason why we should continue to stay there, and strive to improve it. The greater the trials, the fiercer the conflict, the more exacting the demands made upon our allegiance, the more reason is there that we should continue stedfast, and strive to effect an improvement from within rather than desert our post, that we may contribute to pull down that which we ought to have saved.

So it is with all life. We have already considered vocation and the duties which it lays upon us. And we shall see how great men in history are those who have recognised the obligation arising from even a temporary position in which God's providence has placed them. Joseph in the prison in which he was unjustly immured, Daniel in the heathen court, S. Vincent de Paul among the galley slaves, are examples which suggest themselves at once as showing what can be done by, and what apparently is expected of, those who, having given themselves first wholly to God, have then recognised the obligation laid upon them to perform the work, however distasteful, which God thus gives them to do.

Besides the position in which we find ourselves and the obligation thus laid upon us to fulfil its duties, we find ourselves hemmed in by certain restrictions and precepts in which we have grown up, and to which almost unconsciously we have given in our adhesion. There are the rules of society, what is known as manners

or etiquette; there is the code of tradition which hedges in the significant conception of what is known as a gentleman. There is a code of morality which governs the life which aims at respectability; there are the customs of the school, the college, or the community in which we live; while coming higher we awake to find ourselves pledged men in the region of conduct, faith, and Christian morality. Here once more it is all-important to rouse the sense of obligation. Here is a code of rules of conduct, in the formation of which we had no share: it has come down to us by tradition and the mysterious power of public opinion. Here is the general consensus of many generations of men formed into an unwritten law; here is the record of long years of success and failure codified into working regulations; here is the wisdom of God Himself displayed in working rules adapted to my life: sooner or later the time will come when inclination, aided by sinister advice and bad example, will come into conflict with these restrictions. It is therefore all-important that we should recognise the sanction on which they repose, and make sure our sense of obligation towards them. Why should I accept the verdict of society, or the arbitrary restrictions as they seem of public opinion, or the rules of a community, or even the pledges of a narrow religionism? Here, once more, is being felt most keenly at the present day the thrust of independence which presses on these old walls and buttresses by which the fabric of society is reared. It is only too easy to discard social propriety as a foolish prudery: to discard old maxims under the sacred name of progress, and to pose as an example of a much idolised originality which is too magnificent to be confined within the limits of conventional forms.

Faith and morals have no more dangerous enemies than those which attack them from the vantage-ground of an affected superiority, and a more complete religion

of nature. It is all-important, therefore, that no one should rest contented with a passive acquiescence in things as they are, but recognise the obligation of consent, at once rational and deliberate. The traditions which govern society are sacred things which no one can afford to neglect. Who has not despised, at one time or another, the heartlessness of society, which, while ignoring the grave sins which disfigure a man's career, has yet ostracised him for the first breach of social propriety? And yet it is a ritual restriction, poor and worthless it may be, which safeguards things much deeper than itself. The rules and regulations which govern conduct are the case-law which represent the verdicts of many and varied examples. Societies have groped their way to rules through long steps of painful experience, the reason of which only becomes apparent very often when they are transgressed; whereas God's rules, as we have already seen, are based on deep immutable laws, which nothing can supersede. Promise as Satan may, the servant of God knows that he must consent to the obligation laid upon him of absolute renunciation, as the only possible attitude of resistance. Nothing short of entire abnegation will suffice for the World, or anything but utter detestation for the Flesh. All this he must consent to as an obligation which he accepts, if he is wise, without attempting to verify for himself by costly experiment that which a wise provision lent to him without subjecting him to the costly expenditure of a personal purchase. And gradually there will dawn upon him the obligation which comes from conviction.

'I should,' 'I ought,' 'I must' represent to him three stages in which the sense of obligation attains to its development. Strangely and reluctantly at first the child turns back from barriers which he is taught to respect, but which he regards as superfluous annoyances and checks on freedom. Gradually he recognises that

there is an authority behind the restrictions which he ought to respect, even where he despises, until at last he justifies wisdom as being her own child, and owns the rightness and real value of the restrictions, whose irksome nature he still deplores.

II

It is well, therefore, that the sense of obligation should be stayed by such helps and props as may be found. It can never be regarded as satisfactory that the sanction for moral obligation should remain purely negative: that a man should be moral because he fears to be immoral, or seek God because he is told to seek Him, or because the other side of the hedge is littered with disaster and disfigured with failures. 'Dost thou not think that thou art bound?' is speedily followed by 'I heartily thank our heavenly Father.' We must never rest until we have secured for the narrow road, not the same popularity it may be, but a more complete and obvious joy than that which belongs to the broad way of destruction. Pleasure is a word which must be rescued from the painted misery of vice; there is no pleasure in wickedness, and never can be. Gaiety must be brought into her true home away from those who have used her to conceal a heavy heart; while joy remains in her grand dignity as the great Christian experience, which sin rarely dares even to claim. The radiant happiness of joy which belongs to a good life, the joy and peace in believing, and the abounding delight which belongs to the life which has chosen God's law, these are real helps towards maintaining the sense of obligation unbroken and entire. 'Think and thank'[1] go hand in hand; for even greater than the misery of sin is the joy of goodness, as an aid

[1] See Robinson, *Church Catechism Explained*, p. 31.

in rousing the sense of obligation in the heart of a Christian.

And there are few things for which a man may feel more daily and hourly thankful than for a sense of safety. Day by day, in view of life's perils and its awful catastrophes, 'What must I do to be saved?' becomes an anxious and an absorbing question. And as he thinks and looks round on his position, the Christian finds himself placed in 'a state of salvation,' *i.e.* in a state in which, unless he opposes obstacles, he can be, and is being, saved. So complete and far-reaching is this state, that just as a man fails to realise the full blessings of a life lived under the protection of law, until he has experienced the miseries of a state in which freedom is not secure, so it is only in comparison with the slavery of sin and its awful tyranny that we fully comprehend the privileges which belong to a state of salvation. Again and again the taint of heredity, which threatens to overwhelm even reason itself, falls back paralysed by the innate force of Regeneration. Confirmation, with its abiding legacy of strength; Holy Communion, with its constantly renewed food of immortality; the life of protection and the life of progress, all bear witness to the mighty salvation which is being wrought in us: and the while we feel that 'His commandments are not grievous.'

True, at times the strain will be immense, because we have not been faithful to His loving leadership. If we had gone on quietly following the path under the guidance of His eye, all would have been smooth and easy: Baptism would have led us on to the grace of Confirmation; Confirmation would have held us firm in its strong bands until by Communion after Communion we grew in grace, and Christ was formed in us, so that we could not sin because we were born of God.[1] But as it is, our progress in the life of holiness

[1] 1 S. John iii. 9.

has been spasmodic and uneven, so that the strain of keeping pace with God has made us feel weary in well-doing. Still, on looking back, what are 'the days of the Son of Man' to which we turn with a fondness which has no bitterness in it? Are they not those days when God was nearer, and earth with its cries further removed? Are they not those days when we seemed to get glimpses of Heaven and heavenly things and of a joy which no man could take from us; days when the sacramental veils which hide God's presence were thinner, and the glory pierced through and flooded the whole temple of our life; days when the Bread and Wine became transfigured—and lo! there was God; days when the clouds of the summer sky became His chariot, and all the green things of the earth seemed alive with His touch, when we heard the chant of His worship in the song of the birds, and felt His terror in the thunder, and His gentleness in the flowers? Among the things for which we may daily and hourly thank Him Who is our salvation, we may reckon that clearness of vision and that delicacy of hearing which belong to those who, living in the fulness of God's grace, having ears hear, having eyes see, and have escaped the unutterable anguish of those who are without God in the world.

But thoughtfulness and thankfulness bring a man to the feet of God, and open up at once a sense of dependence on Him so complete that the power to remain in this state of salvation is felt to depend entirely on the constant and never-failing supply of His grace. Perseverance, even, in the pursuit of our own highest interest and greatest happiness, is, by reason of the strange paradoxes of sin, itself dependent on the goodwill produced in us by the grace of God.

In thinking, therefore, of the helps provided by God towards the full recognising of our obligations, we shall not do wrong to consider that particular work of

grace within us which is wrought by the voice of God, speaking to us and guiding us, which we know under the name of 'conscience.' Every day there comes to us all, the occasion when we feel the strain of our Baptismal promises, in the constant invitations to accept what we have promised to renounce, to ignore what we have pledged ourselves to believe, and to do what we have sworn to forsake. It is all-important at such moments that we should have a monitor at hand, whose decision is final and whose judgment is absolute, which almost instinctively approves or condemns, so that rarely even is there any conflict or doubt as to its decisions. God Himself will keep us in this state of salvation, if we will hear His voice with unhardened heart in the Personal guidance which He gives us, in our conscience; for conscience is an inward adviser which God has given to man, in view of the difficult path which he has to follow. From his knowledge of good and evil man is able to classify his actions under one head or the other.

It has been said of our first parents that they lost Eden and they found a conscience. Lost spirits do not know good, angels do not know evil, man being what he is knows both, and values his actions accordingly. And yet, common as is the recognition of God's voice in conscience even by those who seldom listen to its warnings, it is by no means clear what are its limits and methods of working. It would seem that it has counterfeits which pretend to its powers, or that in itself it can become degenerate, or that we do not understand the secrets of its working; for a moment's reflection will satisfy us, that just as every promulgator of heresy rests his errors on some passage in the Bible from which he claims support and justification, so actions, the most contrary the one to the other, are often supported and advanced on the plea of conscience. But lately this

great imperial nation was impelled by its national conscience to take up arms against the Dutch of the independent South African states; the Dutch were impelled equally by their national conscience to attempt to drive our forces into the sea in the cause of freedom. Each appealed to justice; each called upon God to recognise their singleness of heart, and the sacredness of the cause for which they were fighting. Here is a man dying for conscience-sake at Smithfield; here is a man equally impelled to send him there for conscience-sake. Here is S. Paul conscientiously pursuing the Christians to a cruel death; here is the same apostle conscientiously reversing his policy, and covering with honour those whom before he had loaded with infamy. What is it? Can I ever make a mistake in obeying my conscience? Can I go conscientiously wrong? or may I still believe that if my heart condemns me not, I have confidence and freedom of approach towards God?[1]

Conscience, as we know it as a permanent voice within the heart, seems, in divine literature, to take the place, in the New Testament, of the occasional direct voice of God, which appealed to the fathers in the Old Testament either directly or through the prophets; while in the great systems of morality which lay outside the gospel it seems to have represented the voice of God now become more direct and more explicit in proportion as the feeling after Him became more earnest, and the love of truth more constant and sincere.

The term conscience, as we know it, does not immediately explain itself, and indeed has been variously interpreted. Conscience means apparently a simultaneous knowledge, whether this be the knowledge of a law and of our actions as agreeing or disagreeing with this law, or whether it be an inner reflective

[1] 1 S. John iii. 20, 21.

knowledge, a knowledge within a knowledge which sits in judgment on our actions as we do them, a knowledge beyond and above the knowledge necessary for the due performance of our actions. Or it may mean, following another line of its derivation, simply a penetrating intensive knowledge which enables a man to be his own judge, and so even anticipate the final decrees of the last great day.

It is only as we look into it that the difficulties and contradictions which surround our conception of conscience begin to resolve themselves. It is not unknown in the history of our naval and mercantile marine that a ship, going in accordance with the carefully studied indications of the compass, has run upon a rock, or, in other words, has been scientifically steered by the aid of the compass to destruction. We do not therefore seek henceforth to banish the mariner's compass from our ships in favour of some other method of guidance, but we do study, if we may perchance discover, what causes, if any, account for its aberration, whether these are to be found in certain electric currents, or in the nature of the cargo which the ship was carrying, or in some neglect of proper rectification. So, if it be true that conscience at times leads us wrong, we need not therefore seek to disparage or doubt the existence of this Heaven-sent guide, but rather search for causes which may account for its deflection, and explain its aberration. There is no doubt that in conscience we have a highly delicate faculty of judgment, which needs watching and protecting, and which can very easily either become inactive or even be put out of gear altogether.

Certainly we may recognise these simple rules respecting it. First of all, this is a faculty which must never be trifled with. It must be a common experience with many that actions are done, or duties left undone, as to which conscience has uttered a vigorous protest.

We say, 'I do not feel happy about this particular course, I feel that I am doing wrong.' But if, in spite of this appeal, we still persist in doing it, if stifling the voice we persevere in the course we have taken, then next time the voice is feebler and the protest less energetic. Balaam is confronted with a doubtful suggestion, but one rendered attractive by the hope of gain; the voice of God is absolute to him in forbidding it, but the inclination of Balaam is evidently towards evil. The next time the voice is fainter: 'If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that thou shalt do';[1] and Balaam does not realise the wickedness of what he is doing until God actively interposes to forbid the madness of the prophet. It is a serious thing in the history of our own responsibility, and in view of the great Judgment Day, to go against conscience, and neglect its warnings, but it is also serious in view of the integrity and completeness of our moral nature. For to tamper with God's warnings means an injury inflicted on this sensitive faculty. If it is a serious thing to make even a resolution which we do not keep, because it impairs the power of the will; even worse is it to turn a deaf ear to the voice of conscience, for to do so is to deprive us of that check and criticism upon our conduct which will hinder us from a contented acquiescence in evil. A good man contentedly going wrong is a sorry sight, for it may mean that he has first stifled his conscience, and then is falling further and further away because he has lost his natural corrective and restraint.

Once more, if the conscience can become impaired, it also needs constant education.[2] It deals with knowledge, assorts it and classifies it as it comes;

[1] Num. xxii. 20.

[2] The writer is indebted for many thoughts in this section to a report of a sermon by Dr. Gore, Bishop of Worcester.

but if knowledge is withheld from it, the sphere of its influence is necessarily curtailed. There is a right and a wrong in more things than we sometimes care to believe. There are people who have fallen into grave moral offences, and have burdened themselves with an entail of evil, because they say they did not know that what they did was wrong. Where was conscience? It had remained uninformed, and had never been instructed. There have been those who affirm that they have never broken one of God's commandments in their lives; here again the conscience has been kept uninformed; evil has been associated only with certain well-known defined and notorious sins, and all the delicate shades of mischief which gather round grave offences have been overlooked; the adultery of a wrong gaze, the murder of an angry word, the false witness of scandal, the theft of wasted time, the irreverence which may be shown to authority not directly parental—all these have not been brought into the category of evil, and conscience, after some misgivings and obstinate questionings, has decided that it knows nothing about them, and is not concerned with them at all. How long it takes before a man can bring such a simple thing as likes and dislikes in food under the control of conscience, and believe that, quite apart from the question of temperance or excess, a man is morally responsible for injuring his health, impairing his usefulness, or even doing anything to interfere with the hardness which belongs to the good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Some there are, again, who have never informed their conscience as to the right use of money, and who will take 'my own' to be a formula which covers any sort of extravagance and waste, who will spend thousands of pounds on some idle amusement without one pang of conscience, who use money without attempting to govern or estimate its expenditure. There are some

again who pass all their time in neighbourhoods which need their help without subscribing a farthing to the schools in which their poorer neighbours are being educated in the principles of the religion of Christ and His Church; who do nothing to alleviate the sorrows which multiply so thickly around them. War, famine, pestilence may devastate the land, still they contribute a conventional coin on Sunday, and write down their names in a few subscription-lists, without care or interest in that to which they contribute. They neither miss the money nor hope to see any good effects resulting from its expenditure. Their home arouses in them no sense of duty. Children, servants, dependants all revolve in their orbits around a great central self. If the day is wet, it is for their annoyance; if it is fine, it is for their especial convenience. Prosperity is welcomed as it affects their balance at the bank; adversity is disliked as it causes a depression. There are men and women who pass through the world without sense of responsibility to any living being, and their conscience does not reprove them, because it has never been instructed. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' albeit Cain was the speaker, represents to them a sufficiently sound moral attitude to repress any intrusion on the part of conscience into regions where its influence does not run, and its interference is severely deprecated.

There is no doubt that conscience, if it is to help us towards recognising our obligations, must be informed, and then, if kept sensitive, may be trusted to give a right and proper warning.

There are few words which mean so much when rightly applied as the term 'conscientious'; for it means that a man in great things, and in little things no less, keeps his actions under the control of conscience, that conscience has its say on the rightness or wrongness of every action, and is not kept for long

voyages, stormy seas, and well-defined perils. It is a duty incumbent on all those who have pledged themselves before God to a definite course of action to keep their consciences accurately informed. There are questions of the day which must needs be tested and examined, about which the Christian must make up his mind as to whether they are right or wrong, and act accordingly. It is his duty to read, study, listen, and to avail himself of the experience which is in so many ways placed at his disposal. He must not sail along in an easy way, saying always, 'There shall no harm happen unto me.' It was not without reason, as we were considering above, that the Christian child, with all his promises fresh upon him, was to be called upon to hear sermons. It is a responsibility laid on those who preach, to rouse and quicken the understanding and inform the conscience, that it may see how very much greater than is sometimes supposed is the area of evil, extending, as our Blessed Lord has told us, to regions as remote from sinful actions as the thoughts and intents of the heart. And it is incumbent on those that hear to rectify accordingly their line of defence and their methods of resistance. For it is now and always, while men sleep, that the enemy comes and sows tares among the wheat, and goes his way to wait for the crop of evil which carelessness was too negligent to avert.

Further still, where the conscience has been informed it must also be trained. One of the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit which are poured upon the baptized child has to do with this. By the spirit of counsel there is conferred a greater power of choosing, not so much between the good and the bad as between the good and the better. One great department of the action of conscience is to choose aright in the case of conflicting duties, or in what are pre-eminently called 'cases of conscience.' There are places where

two roads diverge, both apparently equally to be desired, both equally right, but which conflict the one with the other in a perfect dilemma of duty. In cases like this the blessing of a trained conscience will be seen, which has learned to trace, even by a faint indication, an intimation, or a suggestion, the way of the Spirit; which has been able to see just the one little mark of superiority which singles it out as the truest and most right path of the two.

No doubt conscience may easily slip into the position of an indolent adviser who formulates the verdict which ignorance or self-pleasing suggests, but if it is kept open in all its delicate power in the soul, it will be to the child of God a sanction sacred and inviolable, speaking to him as from God Himself; it will shed abroad the glow of His approbation, and reflect the terror of His wrath. Its condemnation will bring him to his knees in fear, its approval will lift him up on the wings of confidence into the glory of His smile.

It follows, if these considerations be true, that conscience, however delicate, however much it may need instruction, cannot be superseded in favour of any substitute. 'The light that is in thee' is given us for our illumination and guidance, and we cannot go to another, however wise, and say 'give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.' Any direction by another which is worthy of the name must be a direction of conscience, a direction which puts before us what is right and true, and fearlessly indicates what is evil, but the choice is, and always must be, our own. No man may give over to another the ultimate decision, which governs his actions and decides on their rectitude or error. All direction should tend to enable a man to see for himself, for not to use the inward eye which God has given us is a sure road to spiritual and intellectual blindness.

But most often the attacks which are made on so-

called direction of conscience, are levelled against a danger largely imaginary, or at least a danger which it is perfectly easy to conjure up in theory, but which is comparatively little known in practice.

However this may be, there are plenty of directors of conscience in the world, who know no scruple, and stick at no wickedness, if so be they can gain their end, and that end is to destroy the individual personality, to make the weak the followers, the adherents, and finally the slaves of the strong; and to get into rank so many living machines who will act in a uniform way, ask no question, give no trouble, nor produce disturbing and disagreeable scruples, which interfere with the peace of the strong man armed who keeps his palace, the undisputed owner of its goods. It is needful to insist that a man should not set up in the place of his conscience the voice and authority of his party. Many a man finds himself involved in questionable actions, such as his heart cannot sanction, in obedience to the supposed orders of the party to which he has given in his allegiance. He does not agree, he cannot approve, but he must pronounce shibboleth with the right accent. Individually he reprobates the action altogether, it is unworthy of his own tradition, of the best tradition of an Englishman; politically he must stick to his party, and vote as they expect him to vote. He cannot believe it to be right, the voice within him tells him that it is wrong, the Bible tells him it is wrong, still he must be true to his party: he must applaud their doubtful speeches, and approve their violent actions, and give a dishonourable acquiescence or accept with an even more dishonourable silence.

Or his heart is convinced, his mind acquiesces, the calumnies which have obliterated for him the truth are shattered, and he sees now as he never saw before what he ought to do; and the voice of party rises up 'Art thou also of Galilee?' 'Surely thou art one of

this man's disciples.' The cry of tendencies waxes loud, truth is no longer regarded in itself, but in so far as it fits in with the watchwords and war cries of party, and conscience goes down trampled under foot by the mob, and the man is false to himself, but true to his party.

The World which the Christian has renounced appears disguised as another director of conscience. 'Do as others do' is the formula which represents its influence, which is the direct opposite of 'do as your conscience tells you you ought to do.' This is how the World our sworn enemy wins its way by deliberately laying siege to the conscience of men, and causing them to surrender. It never can be right in a man to abdicate his absolute claim to a free and independent exercise of his unbiassed judgment. To do so, is to deprive society of its natural protectors. God has given to each man a post to fill, a protest to make, a judgment to give, an action to perform, and he only can do it. Sad will it be for him, if at the Last Day God marks him out as the one man who, stored, enlightened and strengthened to keep that post for Him, was yet the one man who was false to his conscience, and hopelessly betrayed the trust reposed in him.

But in view of the help which conscience can bestow upon a man who would be true to his vows, and cherish a sense of his obligations, it must be further remembered that by its help a man is enabled, in view of the Last Day, in view of the tendency to fall away which ever haunts him, so to judge himself that he may not be judged of the Lord. Self-examination is regarded too often as a common-place of books of devotion, or as an exercise enjoined on candidates for Confirmation, but in itself meaningless and unprofitable; consisting in reading over questions as to sins which the man never commits, and which it is not well even to think about, and suggesting a self-analysis at

once morbid and unprofitable, conducive to the belief that everything which he does is wrong.

And so the court of conscience remains idle, and things which might very easily have been remedied, mount up to a prodigious head, and the sinner drifts on to the day of judgment, without self-knowledge or real repentance, to hear the verdict pronounced with all the terrors of a surprise, because he had neglected to profit by the injunctions 'Know thyself' and 'Judge thyself.' No careful and well-instructed Christian should retire to rest each night without some effort, not to read through a string of questions, but to pass in review before conscience the things which he has done during the day. If he is living near to God, conscience will tell him at once if anything has been done amiss. If he is living carelessly, a little reflection will recall him to a sense of his position, and further, at certain seasons, or, as the Prayer Book orders, before Holy Communion, he will make a special self-examination and a special confession, either immediately to God, or mediately to God before His priest. This must be no acknowledgment of sinfulness, but a confession of sins, which if we believe God's word, we are bound to pour out before Him, and realise, if we may, their blackness and ingratitude, and their exceeding sinfulness.

Certainly in conscience we have one of God's greatest helps to enable us to realise the vastness of our obligations, and our difficulty in keeping them, if only we could be wise unto salvation in listening to its voice. 'For a man's mind is sometimes wont to tell him more than seven watchmen that sit above in a high tower.'[1]

[1] Ecclesiasticus xxxvii. 14.

III

It is not without reason that the special prayer here suggested in the Catechism should be determined in the way of perseverance. We can see of old how even in the direct presence of God, and under the immediate shadow of His wrath, Israel shrank from their privileges as the peculiar people, and gave the rein to their lower self, which lusted after Egypt with its flesh-pots, even if it meant slavery, rather than after goodness and God, if it meant a struggle. Many a soul has sat down wearied, and given up in very despair, as, having fought its way through the fiery heats of youth, it finds still the tempter, with his 'then' and 'then' waiting for him in every turn and circumstance of life. It is at such a time perhaps that he learns as a secret of perseverance, and not only as a lesson of trust, the deep and abiding strength of the counsel, which bids him take no thought for the morrow, but to live to-day in the strength of to-day's bread. We must not look forward in despair at the length and trials of the road; but make our calling and election sure, by the single victories of single days, which carry us on unto our life's end.

PART II

Catechist. Rehearse the articles of thy belief.

Answer. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Question. What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?

Answer. First, I learn to believe in God the Father, Who hath made me, and all the world. Secondly, in God the Son, Who hath redeemed me, and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.

CHAPTER I

FAITH

Thou hast been, Thou art our Refuge,
When this day of surging thought
Brings all sanctities to question,
And all hollow faiths to nought;
Oh what doubts, what drear negations,
Straightway 'neath our feet are trod,
When we answer with our *Credo*
In a true and living God!

We spoke in a previous chapter of three great conceptions which the child will realise in after life have been put before him by his god-parents. The Catechism proceeds now to state and briefly explain the second of these, which has to do with faith.

The child wakes in his growing consciousness to find himself pledged to believe, and to exercise a mysterious virtue known as faith: while certain propositions are put before him to which he has given assent as being true, and which are to be woven more and more into the texture of his life until they become living principles of action, and the starting-point for further explorations of the unseen.

We are so accustomed to the sound of the word Faith, and it may mean so little to us, that we should not do amiss to try and see why we were thus pledged as infants, and whether we have been altogether true to our promise that we would believe, as well as renounce, and do.

I

In asking us to believe, and in exacting a promise from our god-parents that we should believe, the Church makes a great assumption, namely, that there is a branch of useful knowledge which is not known to the ordinary official inspection with which the world will test a child's proficiency, that there is a region of things invisible which can be brought into sight, and of things unknowable by ordinary methods which can be known. This is something quite different from the inculcation of principles of morality, which in the long run are necessary to the proper fulfilment of his task as a citizen and his proper development as a rational being. It is different from the ordinary presentment of the obligations of duty, or of things to be done under the sanction of 'undenominational ethics.' Faith and the duty of believing open up the whole question of relations with an unseen personal Being, with things which are eternal in contradistinction to those which are temporal, with duties which are not sanctioned by any merely human law, or dictated by any will of man, but which appeal to a supernatural sanction and the laws of a spiritual society. For a period of years during the Commonwealth our children were refused Holy Baptism, and were registered as citizens of the world, instead of being started forth on the quest of Faith to find Heaven and Heavenly things, and the result was seen in the absolute reign of sensualism in the days of the Restoration. Now, once more in England, since the year 1870, the Government of this country has turned its back on such matters as Faith as a requirement of good education for children, and has determined to leave the development of any believing faculty there may be in a child to private enterprise, and has made religion an optional matter,

as if it were some special subject outside the ordinary equipment of a child's life.

And the result has been a maiming and deforming of character; a large region full of rich treasures has been shut off from the children, it has been suggested to them, that if there are things eternal and invisible at all, they have no profitable bearing on human life, and the eye of faith has been closed from disuse, and has perished through atrophy, while the requirement here made from the godfathers as to the instruction of their children has received a fresh sanction in view of the calamity which is seen to follow on its neglect. The following is the testimony of one who may be regarded as an impartial observer, as to the blow struck at the fulness of human character by a system of education in which faith is either eliminated or, at the best, condemned with faint praise. 'Upon these city generations there has operated the now widely-spread influence of thirty years of elementary school-teaching. The result is a *mental* change; each individual has been endowed with the power of reading, and a certain dim and cloudy capacity for comprehending what he reads. . . . A change more vital and more ominous for the future is widely attested by those familiar with the new city type: the almost universal decay, amongst these masses and unheeded populations, of any form of spiritual religion. Morally, indeed, they for the most part accept a standard which is the astonishment of their friends. Patience under misfortune, a persistent cheerfulness, family affection, and neighbourly helpfulness are wide-spread amongst them. But the spiritual world, whether in nature, in art, or in definite Religion, has vanished, and the curtain of the horizon has descended round the material things and the pitiful duration of human life. In former time, in England, for better or worse, the things of the earth were shot with spiritual significance; Heaven

and Hell stretched out as permanent realities; the "kingdom of all the worlds" rose up as "the theatre of man's achievements," and "the measure of his destiny." To-day amongst the masses of our great towns, God is faintly apprehended as an amiable but absentee Ruler; Heaven and Hell are passing to the memories of a far-off childhood, the one ceasing to attract, the other to alarm.'[1] It is possible that it is not too late yet to learn not only that without Faith it is impossible to please God, but also that life without it is robbed of its chief excellence and highest source of productiveness. A savage in the Library of the British Museum, or a blind man in the National Gallery, is not a more pitiable example of maimed capacity, than a child or a grown-up man moving amidst all the wonders of life, with God's hand upon him and His love encircling him, of which he is all unconscious, and towards which he has no relations or apparent desire for their development.

Those who pledged us to believe, and started us with an endowment of Faith, believed, or acted as though they believed, in a rich store-house of blessing all around us, to be reached by supernatural effort, and full of promise, for the life which now is and not only for the life which is to come.

II

There is no doubt that we need to realise more than we do the vastness of the area into which we were introduced, its exceeding fruitfulness, and its rich capacity of development, which are represented to us by the word Faith, and suggested to us by the exercise of that power known as believing. Faith is no altar 'to the unknown God' erected by one who wishes, at

[1] Charles Masterman, *The Heart of the Empire*, pp. 8, 9.

least, to be on the safe side if certain opinions should prove to be true; believing is no mere payment of a life insurance which will bring in some advantage after death, which it is the part of a prudent man to pay. It is rather, as we have already hinted, the opening up of relations with all that is most powerful, most beautiful, most real in the world, without which the highest developments of character are not possible, and life's highest joys fail to be realised. All around us there is a vast system of life, which for lack of a better name we call the supernatural, but which for all that is just as real as that of which we are cognisant by our bodily sensations. Wordsworth [1] has told us in his magnificent ode (whatever deductions we may make from some of its underlying assumptions) how this inner world is the most real of all worlds to the infant, how he sees this phenomenal state of things at first lit up in all the radiance of Heavenly glow, so that no impressions ever exceed or even approach in intensity to the first impressions of childhood; and then how gradually all this glory melts away as the world-stream comes flooding in with its materialism and the glowing East recedes farther and farther. He speaks elsewhere in the same strain of the child living in the unseen, when he says:—

> Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
> And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
> God being with thee when we know it not. [2]

And so Cardinal Newman has spoken in well-known lines of the hope which cheers the man to whom this radiance is only a memory, and who longs for the bright visions of his childhood, that in the end of the days at life's even-tide it may be light, and with the dawn of the new life the angel faces may smile again

[1] Wordsworth's Ode, 'Intimations of Immortality,' etc.
[2] Wordsworth's Sonnet, 'A Calm Evening.'

which cheered the heart of childhood, and which were loved always, but for a time lost. There are people to whom all through their lives these visions remain as realities which brighten more and more towards the dawn. As the poet and painter live in a richer world than we do, and sometimes lure us out of ourselves to see eye to eye with them the glories which flit before their vision, so those who are masters of Faith inspire us sometimes with a desire to catch a glimpse of what is so real to them, and we are cheered by a sight fleeting and transitory, yet eloquent to us of a reality which forbids us to doubt the possibilities which open up to us in believing. There are men who say with Cardinal Newman, in his famous sermon for Michaelmas Day,[1] that they can detect the fluttering robes of angels in the beauties of nature. There are men who spend large portions of the day in talking with a Being Whom they call God, who tell us that they find His Presence in the simple rites of religion, and hear His voice in the words of an ancient book; men who tell us that the world is full of God, that He is guiding and ruling every action of their lives, that He has told them what to do and they do it; what to avoid and they avoid it; what awaits them in the future and they look for it; what is the true clue for understanding the past and they follow it; and if you ask them how they have attained, not to this knowledge merely, not to this opinion, but to this certainty, they will tell you that it is by Faith, which brings spiritual things within their horizon; Faith which causes the spiritual world to dawn upon the soul; Faith which 'liberates the intellectual being of man, his soul, and all his thoughts, so as to move in the presence of divine realities, so as to apprehend the substantial revelation which is awaiting him, so as to be with God in the spirit.'[2] This Faith,

[1] Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. ii., Sermon xxix.
[2] Fr. Waggett.

they will tell you with S. Paul, is a gift of God; with Hope and Love, its own sisters, it is a virtue which has God for its object, and is ever being guided and enriched by Him in those means which He has devised for its development.

There is no doubt that there is this region of Faith, and this power of believing, which have been and are still intense realities to multitudes of thinking men, who have cheerfully responded to the venture made for them by their god-parents, and have thanked God again and again that their eyes have been opened to see the wondrous things of His Law. We have seen before now rising up on the surface of the waves which roll through the narrow straits which separate England from France the three towers which beckon us forward to the port of Calais: 'the lighthouse for life and the belfry for labour,' and the church tower 'for patience and grace.' There they stand in an honourable triumvirate. He who built the church tower knew of regions beyond the sound of the belfry, and of shores where the beacon-warning of the lighthouse could not penetrate; He who built it saw God; the courts of heaven were as real to him as the wind-swept floor of the sea, or the citizen-thronged area of the market-place.

If we look down from some height over London, or study it in a picture which represents the days of Faith, those days when men did not busy themselves in pulling down churches but in multiplying them to an extent at which in our more materialistic days we marvel, we see before us in every direction the church towers and steeples which point up to Heaven with beckoning finger, and would cheer us with the sound of their bells, or steady us by their silent protest. Here again, must we not say as we look at them, they who raised those towers saw God? They were conscious of a Presence around and about them; the

buildings which they raised were the expressions of their Faith. Just as the chimneys and shaft openings represent to the traveller in the Black country a hidden subterranean life and industry of which he knows nothing, but which here comes to the surface, so these buildings, so costly and so beautiful, speak to us of a vast celestial life which here finds an expression on earth in the Faith of those who reared them. Of course it is possible to deny the existence of such a faculty as Faith at all, and to refer it to the large class of mental and spiritual delusions by which men mistake fancies for facts, and project their own visions into an objective reality which they call upon others to believe under pain of anathema. There are numbers of people who tell you that they believe that the Bible is the Word of God, because they have been told so, but who, if you press them far enough, are bound to confess that they have never detected any flow of inspiration in its pages, they have never looked for it, and have never found it, and would be unable to recognise it if they did, so completely is inspiration a term to them, and nothing more. There are numbers again who are only irritated by the lofty rhapsodies and impassioned utterances in which the Saints have spoken of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. The words seem high-strung and unreal, and to correspond with nothing which they have either experienced or have seemed likely to experience. These same men will resent what they call undue familiarity with the name of God, or personal appeals to our Lord Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit. God to them is a name, an idea, an empty throne before which they bow, but there are no relations opening up between God and the soul, such as the rapturous votary of Faith would have us all believe not only to be possible but necessary.

There is no doubt that Faith as a faculty at all will be challenged, and will be reminded of some gloomy

and disreputable chapters in the world's history, where it has been stripped of the royal garments to which it had no right, and driven away as superstition, with the applause of all right-thinking men.

And what has Faith to say for itself? What defence can it make when so attacked?

Faith appeals to an innate instinct in man, such as we have considered above, which leads human nature to believe that there is more around us than that which is cognisable by our senses. More than this: there is a craving after a Supreme Being, some Power outside us, which is described in Bible language, as 'feeling after God.' And when in response to this instinct men have followed up its leading they have 'found Him Who is not far from every one of us.' We believe that we can account for Faith; we believe that it is based on a spiritual appetite for God, implanted like any other appetite. We believe that God gives it to His children as a means of reaching out to the supernatural, just as He gives us means of attaining to the riches of life, which are within the reach of all of us.

And this Faith appeals to the verification of experiment. When much time has been spent at the bottom of the mountain arguing for and against the possibility of a glorious view from the summit, Faith says as the ultimate appeal, 'come and see.' Climb the mountain, fulfil the conditions which are imposed, and then 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'[1] We were told as children that there was a God in the world, and that we must act upon this belief: following out this command we found God, and He became a reality to us. We were told of supernatural grace, of Sacramental virtues, of divine messages, of paths which led up to God and landed us in the glory of His

[1] S. John vii. 17.

Presence; we heard and saw and knew, and by experimental religion we developed that most sure and stedfast certainty known as conviction, when Faith passed out of the region of an imposed duty, and a pledge made in the name of an unconscious child, into a certainty based on the conclusion of fixed and definite experiment.

And yet what are we to say to those who have climbed and have seen no view, who have made the experiment and have only found failure and disappointment? Is it not a matter of temperament after all? Just as some with a strong imagination will see ghosts and fairies, where others with more robust nerves will only see shadows and shifting lights, so may it not be once more that here too, as with the playgoer, 'each man sees what he carries in his heart'?[1] And may not Faith be only the projection of an image in our heart, thrown, by the strong light of imagination, on to the screen of material things? It might be so, did we not believe ourselves able to account, as in the one case for the presence, so here for the absence, of Faith. What happens to our bodily powers if they are not exercised? What happens to our reason if it is not cultivated? And what happens to Faith, if it is not developed, or even if it is actively destroyed? It perishes, not to be revived. Even those who are endowed with the advantages of a costly education, and are put in the way of securing their own material interests, often lamentably fail in deriving the benefits placed within their reach, or in attaining the ideal sketched out for them: so it is with many who have received the gift of Faith. The capacity is there, instruction has pointed out the way of development, the way of truth is opened out, but there is no appreciation, and the supernatural world remains sealed to

[1] Ein Jeder sieht, was er im Herzen trägt.—GOETHE'S *Faust*, Prolog, line 179.

them; either because Faith has never been put into practice, or else because in some way it has been actively injured by vicious courses or materialised by indolence and want of appreciation. It is not in vain that we pray in the Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Easter, that we may love the thing which God commands, and desire that which He promises. The approaches to Faith, as to many other valuable regions of discovery, are stern and difficult, and we must love God and Holy things before they will seem worthy of our love. Science, too, has its fairy regions of discovery, which are open only to those who have the scientific disposition and aptitude for their discovery. And no one attaches much importance to the scepticism of the unscientific who refuse to believe things to be true which cannot be demonstrated in a popular manner, but only by attention to minute and laborious calculations which they are unable or unwilling to undertake. No one, for instance, would be prepared to assert that a star does not exist because it can only be seen through a telescope, or that the minute organisms which teem in the water are only creatures of the brain because they can only be discerned through a microscope. Let us remember that the wondrous joys of science are within the reach of all. The oscillations of a lamp, and the fall of an apple to the ground, are keys which were in every hand before Galileo and Newton found the lock to which they fitted. And so it is true to say that the wondrous joys of science, although they are within the reach of every one, are yet, for all that, not the property of the average man.

May it not be equally true that the experiences of Faith, which also are open to and within the reach of all, are yet withheld from those who have not qualified themselves to fit the key which unlocks their mysteries? Spiritual things are spiritually discerned,—This is an

axiom both of Holy Scripture and of common experience. If a new comet has been observed in the heavens we do not ask the man in the street if he has seen it, and accept his verdict as final. We rather seek to know what opinion the astronomer is able to pronounce, who has patiently studied and investigated the probabilities of its appearance, who has sat for long hours in his observatory looking out into the night, who has used with scientific accuracy the delicate instruments best suited to his quest, and who has followed the indications which ages of research have pointed out as the path of discovery, and which his scientific Bible has illuminated with the light of certainty. We need not be disturbed because the verities of Faith are questioned by the careless and indifferent or by the average observer. We should have more reason for perplexity if they were not. But the fact that spiritual experiences are questioned, and the power of Faith denied, should make us all the more ready to look well to our methods and test our religious habits. It is not demonstration that we want, but the knowledge of the proper use of the telescope. It is not a diminishing series of objects of belief that will give us relief, but the power to realise spiritual things when we see them, and the power of rightly scrutinising those regions where they are to be found.

III

It is abundantly clear that Faith requires to be scientifically handled and scientifically developed. It is by no means the easy thing which every one can enterprise with a good-natured acquiescence in what is told to him. Faith is not credulity, nor the surrendering to another the proper use and direction of those faculties which God gave us to use. To be

shown the site of a gold mine is not the same thing as making a fortune, although it indicates where a fortune can be made. So Faith makes certain demands from those who would profit by its powers, and who would know the strength as well as the joy and peace of believing.

1. First of all, much that has been said above will prepare us to recognise that Faith demands an effort on the part of him who would use it. No one can imagine, if he will pause to think, that the roads which open into any of the rich spiritual regions which surround his path are accessible to anything but earnest endeavour. Science has its wealth of treasures which lie within the reach of all of us, but the scientific man will be the first to tell us, that the riches of which he has cognisance can only be won by labour, obedience, patience and self-denial. He will tell us that we need capacity for using aright the scientific instruments by which discovery is made possible, and humility in submitting private judgment to the dogmas of science which are stored in the Bible of ascertained facts. The rich world of music again, with all its delights of sound, and its fascinating themes which, like Orpheus of old, draw the listener after them into the regions of pure celestial joy, is not open to him who despises labour and practice, and contents himself with the general attitude of an amateur.

Art in painting or sculpture has started its inspirations in the dark uncongenial atmosphere of long, minute and technical study. In like manner Faith has nothing to show to the amateur. He may pass through the richest regions and yet see nothing of the gold which lies buried therein. He may even be as one who takes the rich auriferous site and builds cottages upon it because he distrusts the result of mining operations beneath the surface, or the promise of a treasure which has nothing to show to the ordinary passer-by. The

average man who discredits the existence of objects of Faith may climb up the mountain side and see nothing but mist and drizzling rain where he had been told that he would see the glorious landscape unrolling at his feet. He may gaze out into the midnight sky and fail to detect the bright star which he has been led confidently to look for and admire. Spiritual indolence is a fatal bar to the acquisition of the treasures of Faith. 'Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'[1] The region which is swept by the eye of Faith must be approached through the humiliation of asking, the diligence of seeking, and the persistence of knocking. There are paths and steps of ascent which lead up into it, along which we must push our spiritual observations, and if these are not enterprised, or if they are blocked by indolence, there is really no connection between us and the supernatural. The investigation of heavenly things not only needs a special aptitude in him who thus investigates, but it needs habitual and long-sustained practice in breathing the rarefied air of the supernatural heights, and a prolonged and sustained effort in following up the path which leads into the presence of mysteries. Prayer, as will be considered in a future chapter, is the ordinary medium between us and the objects of Faith, and if this becomes useless or inoperative, if this is blocked, we may very easily be led to believe that Faith has nothing to offer, whereas in reality we had put out no hand to receive it. Nothing can make up for or supersede personal effort. And when we hear, in the full light of God's splendour, which is sweeping over the Church, and filling the world with glory, the piteous cry, 'I cannot see,' most often a closer inspection will show us that the path which leads to God is still untrodden, that the poor hesitating

[1] Quoted from the *Publick Baptism of Infants*—Prayer Book.

soul still lingers below in the region of fog and uncertainty, that if he would see he must climb with painful effort, and laborious foot, and only then will the vision of the city of God burst upon him in its overwhelming magnificence rising out of the mists, and enthroned in majesty on the darkness of this lower world.

2. But besides long and sustained effort, Faith also demands, from him who would know the fulness of its riches, something of the spirit of venture. 'The ventures of Faith' is a well known phrase which might be written as a motto over the long roll of heroism which is spread out before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Obviously he who would push his spiritual enterprises into the region of the unseen, must be prepared to sacrifice much of time and energy which might be employed in the affairs of the things which are seen, and are of present mercantile value. 'We fools accounted his life madness'[1] is an estimate as true now as when the words were first written, of the average attitude of public opinion towards those who devote themselves to the service and enterprise of Faith. It is only with an effort that even religious men bring themselves to believe that time spent in prayer is not so much time wasted, as being subtracted from more useful and profitable work. A provision for eternity may be regarded as an excess of caution, more frequently as so much energy wasted, which might have been profitably expended in propping up a prosperous earthly career. It is startling sometimes to remind ourselves of what the martyrs staked on the truth of their convictions. A Christian may well ask himself at the present day what loss he would have incurred, supposing that it were demonstrated that all his religious beliefs were vain and groundless. What has he staked on the truth of his religious beliefs? If it be a question of

[1] Wisdom, v. 4.

worldly speculation, a company or a mining project, or some country to be opened up for commerce, then there is no question of what is meant by having a stake in a venture whose issue is yet doubtful. It is done with deliberation, calculation, and care, but a great deal depends on the success or failure of the scheme, our interests are aroused, our apprehensions quickened, our hopes and our fears are a sure indication of how much we have risked in the venture. We have trusted our property in a place which promises a return, in a place in which we have confidence, and where we believe success to be assured, but where failure would be disastrous. But the ventures made on behalf of Faith are not always so obvious, our best and our dearest interests are not embarked in it, and therefore its success or failure is not so much a matter of vital importance. But for all that, we never can hope to secure any large share in the riches of Faith without some ventures. There is no doubt that the working path of prayer, which was alluded to above, can only be traversed at a great expenditure of time and effort. He who prays much takes many valuable hours which have their money value, and lavishes them on that which many people assure him will give him no adequate return. The long efforts of asceticism, the devotion of almsgiving, the time and money bestowed on works of love and mercy as done to Christ, are all largely based on the belief that here in these directions lies the true life, which alone is worth living, and is crowned with immortality and honour.

Many a young man who has been allured by the so-called pleasures of sin has only refrained in obedience to the dictates of religion; there are times when he even wishes that he could cast off the restriction of Faith, in order to satisfy his evil desires, and enjoy that which in his blindness he believes can give him pleasure. But there comes a time when the path

which he followed, in obedience to the dictates of an unwelcome belief, opens out into the wide and full pleasures of holiness and truth. He learns how the craving of the spirit after what is good rivals the craving of the flesh after what is evil; and having made the venture of Faith, he knows that he has done much more than ensure himself against future punishment: he has realised something of that godliness which has the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is promised to him in the future.

3. And this brings before us a third demand which Faith makes upon her votaries. Any one who would thus enter on the rich fields opened to him in the supernatural world around him must set before himself a high standard of moral purity without which all progress will be impossible. There can be no spiritual discernment if there is no spiritual vision. If God is to be seen, it must be by the pure in heart, to whom alone that vision is possible. It is the terrible curse of an age of materialism that it develops a moral barrier which cuts it off more and more from the higher regions of Faith. The inner supernatural world gets fainter and fainter, as the outer material world becomes grosser and more absorbing. We have not only to lament the striking and obvious dangers which threaten a nation which tampers with the laws of morality, or allows them to be tampered with; we have not only to dread the degradation, bodily and mental, which follows the youth who has made a plunge into sensual sin; more than this, a chasm is thereby opened between the material life here and the bright world of beauty beyond. The Holy Spirit leaves His desecrated temple in the heart of David before the approach of overmastering sin, and the voice of melody gasps itself away in a life which has been shattered and shivered by sensuality.

Spiritualism and necromancy are some of the obscene

forms which crowd upon Saul, once the anointed king, now the apostate, out of the darkness which obscures the heart which has been turned away from God in rebellious sin. The flattering appeal made to us in an age of self-sufficiency to come out of a timid prudery which mistakes ignorance for innocence, and from foolish limitations of experience which are only degrading to grown men, and belong to the immaturity of undeveloped childhood, is not to be welcomed altogether as a counsel of prudence. Innocence, after all, has something to say for itself, and is not the worthless portion of babies and fools. 'Knowledge of wickedness is not wisdom,' and wisdom often suffers from the contiguity of wickedness which has been heedlessly admitted. The evil secret, or the tale of unlovely sin, may possibly leave the soul untarnished in the sense that no actual moral corruption immediately follows; but who shall say that they have left it unharmed? Is it a dimness of vision which makes Heaven and Heavenly things sink farther back on the horizon? Is it a distaste for prayer which robs it of its peace and joy? Is it that the rim of fire and the black spots of dancing evil are projected on the image once so fair and clean? The spiritual expert who wishes to study closely the wondrous things of God's law will not care for those things which, if they fail to defile, yet have a strange power of dimming the brightness of the eye which is accustomed to look upon God. There is no scepticism to compare with that which settles down upon a life of contented sin. To sin is to sever, one by one, all the connections which open up into the region of Faith. If proof of this is needed, there is the common experience in the life of a sinner ready to our hand. When the heart has deliberately yielded to a course of sin, prayer is the first thing which is given up. So S. Theresa has touchingly counselled in her writings: 'Never let any one leave off

prayer on any pretence: great sins committed, or any other pretence whatsoever. For by leaving off prayer the soul will be finally lost, while every return to prayer is new life and new strength, as I am continually telling you. I tell you that the leaving off of prayer was the most devilish and the most deadly temptation I ever met with.'[1] 'I could not pray,' says the sinner. No, because prayer and sin cannot exist together, and prayer which is not prayer becomes intolerable; while prayer which is no longer loved, striving with sin that is cherished, has but little chance in the unequal strife.

IV

It is not without reason, therefore, that the Church would send forth her children pledged to a life of Faith, when there is so much to distract and divert the mind from anything which is unseen to that which is pressing, visible, and of present advantage. The child is reminded by the terms of his promises that there is more in this world than the eye beholds. It is something to have been reminded of God, of salvation and sanctification, and of the mighty issues which surround our life here. Faith has a great work to do which may be the salvation of the coming age. And Faith has also a work to do in the individual life which far surpasses all our expectations. Faith is the remedy for a disabling pessimism, and for the sense of weariness and monotony which settles down over an earth-bound life.

Progress enterprised without God totters on to its inevitable failure; and failure takes the spring out of enthusiasm and the earnestness out of effort. But Faith, in giving God His proper place, is able to realise a power which triumphs over failure. Faith will show us not only the cause of failure, but the

[1] *Saint Teresa*, selected passages by Alexander Whyte, p. 73.

remedy for it. Faith will show us that we may not contemptuously take what we like of revealed truth, and disregard what we consider to be unimportant. Faith will show us that the Fatherhood of God, as a belief which is supposed to support the most advanced schemes of human progress, is powerless as a doctrine, unless we also add to it that which God has revealed to be added, the belief in His saving and sanctifying grace. God has revealed Himself not only as a Father, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servants, but also as One Who saves from the inevitable disaster and opposition which threaten progress, and also as One Who gives the power to keep the whole nature, body, soul, and spirit, complete and entire under the disintegrating forces of human infirmity. Again and again the soul will sink under the dead weight of failure, crushed by the monotony of life and the weariness of the combat, unless supported by that Faith in a higher power, which shows us God ruling in His own world, honoured in His own methods, and sanctified in His own plan of redemption.

Faith also, more than aught else, will save us from the grossness of a materialism which is a perpetual menace to all real progress. 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.'[1] This is the appeal of Faith, whether to the nation or to the individual. The world becomes coarser and poorer when Faith is allowed to die out of it. The decay of spiritual aspiration is marked on the art, the buildings, the manners, the dress, and the literature of the times. A lack of refinement, a want of chivalry, a cynical selfishness may be the last expressions of a lost Faith, which has cast God out of the world, and droops and fails in the gloom of its sunless noonday.

Faith after all is the best corrective for disabling

[1] S. Luke xii. 15.

sin, for it not only supplies the means of resisting it, not only does it throw into our beleaguered natures the hosts of God and all those strong powers which make for righteousness, but even more than this, Faith opens up those visions of beauty and of perfect satisfaction which reveal sin as a hideous disfigurement and rob temptation of its attractiveness. A soul sick with the so-called pleasures of sin will not be able long to resist the satisfaction of the pleasures of God's House. A soul which knows something of the joys of the Father's home will not long remain content with the husks of swine. The satisfaction of the highest part of our being, the joy of the spirit, must in the end supersede and put to shame those lower attractions which pretend to the name of pleasure. If we take our stand by the side of Faith's greatest triumph, which has robbed death of its sting and emptied the grave of its terrors; if, in view of that great certainty where Faith is our only guide through the gloom, we take its hand where no other even pretends to lead us to the other shore, let us remember that there are other regions still over which Faith sheds the quickening light of its glory, which chases away the shadows and banishes the gloom. Sin has no place in our life, it is unnatural and ought not to be there. 'How shall we that died to sin live any longer therein?' Melancholy and disabling depression ought once for all to be banished, they too are unnatural and ought not to be there. 'Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary. There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be

weary, and they shall walk and not faint.'[1] Poverty of life once more is unnatural, and ought not to be there, for Faith has treasures within her grasp which surpass all other riches. The great Italian has told us of the fascination of goodness and the joy of those unspeakable delights which Faith reaches out after, and which Faith alone can see.

> Nella corte del Ciel ond' io rivegno,
> Si trovan molte gioie care e belle
> Tanto che non si posson trar del regno,
> . . . .
> Chi non s'impenna sì che lassù voli,
> Dal muto aspetti quindi le novelle.[2]

He is but repeating in other language what the apostle has once for all spoken by the inspiration of God. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'[3] This was a truth which the stern author of the record of the French revolution had grasped, when speaking of that blood-stained epoch of history. He said, 'Strong was he that had a church, what we can call a church; he stood thereby, though in the centre of immensities, in the conflux of Eternities. Yet manlike towards God and men, the vague shoreless universe had become for him a firm city, and dwelling which he knew. Such virtue was in Belief, in these words well spoken, "I believe." Well might men prize their *Credo*, and raise stateliest temples for it, and reverent hierarchies, and give it the tithe of their substance. It was worth living and dying for.'[4]

[1] Isa. xl. 28-31.
[2] Dante, *Paradiso*, cant. x. 70.
[3] 1 Cor. ii. 9.
[4] Carlyle, *French Revolution*, vol. i. chap. 2, p. 8.

CHAPTER II

THE FAITH

Expect great things, also expect the least things. For the greatest faith, I often think, is shown about the least matters. People will believe the soul is sure to be saved, who have not the heart to believe that God will take away some small evil, if they pray for it.

Il n'y a pas de petites choses dans ce monde, attendu que Dieu se mêle de toutes.

When the area which is swept by the eye of faith is so vast, it is necessary that the vision should be steadied by certain fixed and unalterable landmarks, without which any certainty would be impossible and any real progress be gravely retarded.

Just as in science there are certain first principles about which all are agreed, and which no one but a madman would dispute, so in Faith there are certain points of belief which have been revealed as absolute certainties, from which he who would investigate in the region of Faith must start on his quest, to which he will return if he finds himself perplexed or in manifest error, or brought up by conclusions contrary to those things which are most surely believed among us. It is sometimes forgotten that true liberty is best secured within limits. A liberty to disbelieve first principles, whether gained by human experience or revealed to human faith, only results in a waste of time and mental energy, and retards progress. A man who takes his place in the long line of scientific research

starts from a vantage-ground secured to him by the labours and skill of past generations, and he does not make it his first aim to rebuild for himself the staging from which he works, or reconstruct every plank of his scientific platform. So the Christian child enters on the life of Faith with a certain position secured to him. Certain points he may regard as definitely settled for ever by the sacred tradition of the Church, acting on revelations made to and adapted by her. He may attempt to reconstruct these, if he will; but it will be at his own risk, and at a loss of valuable time in a life none too long for the work committed to it. For we shall see that the objects of Faith set in the spiritual firmament, and the powers and duties of Faith entrusted to the Christian, are not merely his for the purposes of stimulating a scientific curiosity, or even ultimately of steadying his footsteps in his passage through a difficult world; but they are his, that he may the better fulfil the end and object of his being, which is to glorify God in carrying on the work in which every man has a share, and to which every man is bound to contribute. It is obvious that it will be of serious consequence to a man at the outset of his career, and will continue to affect his actions to the end of his life, that he should have a right theory of the condition of things in which he finds himself placed.

It will make all the difference to him, for instance, whether he regards this world around him as a good world, gradually developing its perfections, or whether he believes it to be an imperfect, a fallen world, perpetually struggling to throw off inherent corruptions and defects; whether, in fine, the Fall, if there were a Fall, was a fall upwards into a more perfect state out of savagery, or a fall downwards from a state of felt union with God into a state of alienation from Him.

It will be very important, again, for a man to know

for certain whether there is a God in Heaven at all; if so, to know Who He is, and What He is, as far as He has been pleased to reveal Himself, or as far as Man can discover Him. Is He a God who dwells in the Epicurean security of Olympus;—as Lucretius has painted Him?

> Omnis enim per se Divum natura necesse est
> Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur
> Semota ab nostris rebus sejunctaque longe:
> Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
> Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nil indiga nostri,
> Nec bene promeritis capitur nec tangitur irâ.[1]

Or is He a God Who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and rewards and punishes men for their doings?

Even more it is of the last importance that there should be some knowledge, if knowledge may be had, as to the communication, if any, between earth and Heaven; that all that can be known about grace and divine help should be at the disposal of his Faith; and that he should be able to use those means of access to God, and open up those channels of approach of God to him, which make life so different in its weakness and in its struggles to him who possesses this saving knowledge.

The Church believes herself to possess a compendium of such necessary principles of the things which every man ought to know and believe to his soul's health in the Catholic Creeds. And therefore every child at his Baptism not only promises to renounce all that God hates, but also to believe all that God teaches. Which is summed up for him in its simplest shape in what is known as the Apostles' Creed. Here is contained in a handy form, which, without any serious effort, can be committed to memory, those great root-principles on which the life of Faith is based, and which cannot be

[1] Lucretius, *De rerum naturâ*, ii. 646-651.

disputed without serious harm to the development and progress of the Christian soul.

It is not the object of this particular volume of the series to discuss the history or inner structure of the Apostles' Creed. The present object is rather to show the far-reaching consequences of such a profession of faith if it be conscientiously acted upon; and it will be recognised at once how the Church Catechism narrows down all the mysteries and subtle doctrines of the Creed into this one issue, namely, their direct bearing on the individual soul; while it shows the child that he learns to believe in the Creed in God the Father, Who made him and all the world; secondly, in God the Son, Who has redeemed him and all mankind; and thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifies him and all the elect people of God.

It is to this inner bearing of the Creed on life, to the thought of the influence of what we have promised on what we habitually practise, that our thoughts as baptized Christians should sometimes be directed.

I

First of all, the life of the Christian is the life of one who believes in the Fatherhood of God. 'He professeth to have the knowledge of God: and he calleth himself the child of the Lord . . . he pronounceth the end of the just to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his father.'[1] The very terms of his profession, short and pregnant as they are, ought all to be helpful to him. The Christian's father is *the* Father, the Being on Whom all things depend for life and breath, and Who pre-eminently is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and from Whom all fatherhood in Heaven and in earth takes its name.[2] The tender-

[1] Wisdom ii. 13, 16.

[2] Ephes. iii. 15.

ness of the term in which the personal Principle of all life is named in itself should dissipate any sense of fate or chance, much more any sense of loneliness and insignificance, as an incitement to moral incapacity. The Creed which turns the mind full upon a God who is a father is supported by the divine form of prayer, which also supplicates Him by this same Name. A man who believes in the Fatherhood of God believes at once in his own importance, and in the certainty of receiving loving help, and the abundant manifestations of a tender love.

He is further led on to believe that this Father is Almighty. That He shares His throne with no rival; that there is no divided empire in the world, partly belonging to the powers of good, partly to the powers of evil.

At first this may seem but a barren theological truth which orthodoxy must ever be concerned to maintain. But as he passes along his way and becomes battered in the battle of life, there is hardly any truth which is more precious to him, no strength which is more supporting, than the Almightiness of the Almighty. Here is a point in which Satan pushes continually his usurping claims, that there are situations in which man is powerless in his struggles after good, attitudes of life in which evil is irresistible. And again and again it may be seen how men are borne down by the fascinations of the approach of evil, as a man is rendered powerless by the approach of some dread monster; and the Christian becomes the victim of his foe, not because he is powerless to resist, but because he believes himself unable to escape. So the legend of S. Christopher, which so impressed itself on the mediæval Church, represents the joy of a man who, in his veneration for strength, found himself at last in the service of the strongest man, who yet was found in the fashion of an infant, and not in the

strength of a warrior, nor in the powers of pitiless evil.

And further, the son of God is fortified still more by the knowledge that all things were made by his Father in Heaven, and of right belong to Him, and that he moves amidst the abundant evidences of God's power and benevolence. It gives an added lustre to the earth to know that it all comes from and is preserved by God: the lilies in their beauty attract His notice, the birds as they fly or drop to the ground are under His special care. Such homely principles as thrift and benevolence, kindness to animals, and the dignity of labour become fortified with a fresh sanction, when they are felt to be the attitude which is due to God from those who move about in a world which belongs to Him, amidst the manifold signs of His presence and protecting care.

The Christian's belief, then, in the Fatherhood of God leads him to a truer sense of his own worth, and of his real position in the economy of creation. 'Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.'[1] And truly, to him who realises what is meant by it, it is a wonderful thing to live; to have been started in the world by such a Father, with such powers; to be able to fall back on so much might, and to be surrounded with so many evidences of beauty and resource.

The Christian who says his creed from his heart may feel, as he says it, that he is the noblest expression of God's fatherly love, the fullest witness to His might, and the choicest exhibition of the beauty of His handiwork.

If he looks at his body alone he feels that every generation of the world adds a depth of meaning to the expression of the Psalmist: 'I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'[2]

[1] S. James i. 18. [2] Ps. cxxxix. 13.

He goes with the artist and sees in it the wonderful beauty of form and colour and expression, which have made physical beauty one of Satan's deadliest baits wherewith to entrap souls which have forgotten God, while he recognises the real dignity which underlies the outward expression of the life within. He goes with the surgeon and sees with him the wondrous mechanism of bone and muscle, vein and artery, and all the subtle functions of life so delicately adjusted, and so admirably contrived, that the many members different in themselves all contribute to the welfare of the one body. He goes further with the philosopher and traces the power of the mind through the regions of thought, imagination, and memory. He pauses in admiration before the throne of the Will sitting supreme in control over the network of administration which passes before it. While taking the hand of Religion he goes higher still, and sees in the region of the spirit the boundless possibilities which are open to man, in whose heart God Himself condescends to dwell, vouchsafing the light of His countenance and the greatness of His strength.

It is an awful thing to see a man who has gone wrong. There is nothing to compare to the degradation of the sinner in the world of God's creating. Whatever may be thought of the phenomena of actual possession by evil spirits, such as appears to have been common when our Blessed Lord was on earth, the adverse occupation of man by evil suggests many points of resemblance to it. When sin gets possession of a man all his most precious and dignified powers seem to be worked in the interests of evil, and to his own degradation. The very greatness of his gifts marks out his capacity for humiliation and depravity.

But, on the other hand, there is nothing more wonderful than a man in whom all the beautiful mechanism of his being is directed to a right end. Here at last may

be seen how completely man is the first-fruits of God's creatures. If the word 'sinner' is a sad one, suggestive of waste and ruin and misapplied powers, the word 'saint,' on the other hand, is a glorious one, showing how man may shine as the stars around the greater light of the Incarnate Son of God, Who rules the day of this world's splendour. To believe in the Fatherhood of God is to believe in the importance of our own mission, the dignity of our extraction, and the greatness of our powers. It is to submit ourselves to the education wherewith He forms those who are to live with Him in the dignity of sonship for ever. It is to submit to chastening and discipline to secure the peaceable fruits of righteousness. It is to refuse to submit to the tyranny of evil as being powerless to enslave one who was born to be a king. It is to move with awe amidst the beauties of creation, palpitating with the warmth of life, fresh from the impress of the hand of God. It is to close the great hymn of praise which ceaselessly mounts up on high from all creation singing at its work, with the conscious praise of rational creatures who know what great things God has done for them, and that it is a joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful. For so it is that when all other created things have poured out their praise, the heavens above and the earth beneath, the sun in its splendour, the moon and the stars in their glory, the showers and the wind, the seasons in their ordered course, the mountains, the seas, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the earth, man closes the great hymn—man as God created him, man as God singled him out to be the child of His inheritance, man in his humble dependence on Him, or in self-devotion to His service—and proclaims that the end of all creation is to glorify God, and that to believe in the Fatherhood of God is to proclaim His honour.

II

In the second place, the life of a Christian is the life of one who believes in the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.'

It is needful to insist on this fact, at the outset, that it is impossible for a Christian to dwell on the Fatherhood of God without going on to think of His redemptive grace. It is deliberately suggested in certain popular schemes of education that to believe in God as the great Father of us all is a belief amply sufficient for the mental or spiritual capacity of a child; that it is a simple doctrine on which generally all are agreed, and which does not require any deep subtlety of theological apprehension. The Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement, on the other hand, open up at once the way to theological distinctions, and sectarian bitterness, and are doctrines which may well be added, where necessary, afterwards by those who wish to give a more theological flavour to the simplicity of a plain and undisputed religion. Nothing can be more unsound than such a contention, and nothing more disastrous in its results. The Christian child who wakes up to the sense of his privileges conveyed to him in Baptism may well say:

Non hæc in fœdera veni.

The creed of his Baptism, which the Church ordered to be explained to him, knows of no such mutilation, and for these reasons. Who shall dare to pronounce that to be indifferent which the Lord declared to be essential? Not to dwell on the testimony of certain definite statements, whose genuineness has never been seriously disputed, it would be difficult to deny that the words which close the twentieth chapter of S. John's

Gospel represent the message proclaimed to the world in the record of our Lord's life and teaching contained in the New Testament: 'These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that, believing, ye might have life through His name.'[1] The message proclaimed in the Gospel is the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, and no system of education can afford to despise it.

Further, experience has shown, and is showing every day, as will be seen from testimony quoted above,[2] that to advance through the world with hands outstretched to snatch the bounty of the Father must needs be to court disaster, unless there be also the protecting grace of a Saviour. The materials through which the machine of life is pushed, blunt and injure its delicate mechanism, if it be unprotected and guarded. The Father, the Saviour, the Sanctifier move on together in the unity of the undivided and indivisible Trinity, and as the Catechism clearly indicates, each Person of the Godhead is related to the inmost life of the Christian in a unity of beneficence.

The disasters which attend our advanced civilisation are the disasters which spring from an unprotected use of material advantages in a heart which has grown up unfortified by that sanctity, which enables a man to separate himself from what is hurtful, and separate himself to what is good.

The life of a Christian, then, who believes in Christ must exhibit the distinctive characteristics which belong to a redeemed man. It has been asserted that modern Christianity is only a civilised heathenism. Certainly men have a right to ask that there should be displayed in the Christian life features of beauty unknown to the ages before the coming of Christ, something which distinguishes one who believes himself to have been

[1] S. John xx. 31. [2] P. 115, 116.

redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ, and to have learned at His lips the lesson of a pure morality.

The Creed exhibits step by step the salient facts of the incarnation, birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, with the same venerating insistence which characterises the obsecrations of the Litany, as if each separate act constituted a fresh appeal to our thankfulness and adoring love. And from the enumeration of the facts of our Blessed Lord's life there emerges this great truth, the belief in which must profoundly influence our conduct, namely, that our Saviour entered the world to do two things: to be, first of all, 'a sacrifice for sin,' and then secondly, 'an ensample of godly life.' The life of a Christian who believes in his profession of faith must clearly be a life which is answering to these two characteristics. If Christ came into the world definitely to deal with sin, and to make real goodness possible, it must be a life which negatively has a power over sin in resisting it, and positively a power over righteousness in attaining to it.

Every Christian to whom these articles of the Creed are a reality should be exhibiting the power of Christ's Sacrifice, which has passed into his ordinary life of struggle with evil. There will be marks and fruits of the Sacrifice coming forth in the daily life, as from one who says, 'Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.'[1] In the first place, a man to whom the Creed is a reality, who has grasped some of the mystery which underlies the simplicity of the stated facts, might be expected to exhibit something of the seriousness of Christ's Sacrifice. There is a seriousness in the conversation of a man who has seen some of the horrors of war, which is absent from the light-hearted talk of him who has only read about it or studied it at a distance. There is a seriousness which is never far absent from

[1] Rev. v. 9.

the face of a great doctor who is daily face to face with vital issues in his wrestling with disease. There is a seriousness also in the face of a man who has just looked death in the face. And in like manner, if the Creed goes not out of feigned lips, it ought to be setting up in the life of the Christian the seriousness which belongs to one who realises that he has been rescued by the Sacrifice of the death of Christ, that he is one who has been bought back, to whom the word has been uttered, 'Take up the Cross, and follow Me,' whose life has been deemed sufficiently valuable to receive such a ransom, and who has accepted it again at the hands of God.

There is some reason to fear that the seriousness of the ordinary Christian is not commensurate with the seriousness of his Creed. The struggle with sin exhibits few marks of conflict, the purpose of life but a slight sense of its amazing importance. Nothing is so striking as the profound seriousness of the Church in all the ordered structure of her graduated scheme of sanctified beneficence. Holy Baptism speaks at once of an hereditary taint which when eradicated may survive even in a persistent moral weakness. Absolution is a perpetual witness to the rough and dangerous nature of the paths through which life is conducted. Confirmation tells of vacillation and weakness, and of failing strength. Holy Communion tells of spiritual starvation; the clergy, as they move about, suggest a ministry of healing in an unhealthy world. The very symbolism of a material Church, with its Font and Altar, spiritually recalls the sacrificial blood and purificatory rites of the old covenant, in a way which ought to appeal to what is serious in the heart of man, in an intensity of meaning which an auditorium converging on a pulpit must utterly fail to secure. The very persistence of the Creed, under which the proud intellect of man chafes, or which the superficial regard as a

kind of ecclesiastical impertinence, is weighted with the same serious assumption that a right faith is necessary to salvation. Would that this aspect of the Creed had branded itself deeper on this frivolous age. The Religion of Jesus Christ, whose foundation is marked with such precision, can never be the easy-going expression of individual views and opinions shifting and adapting themselves to every age. It cannot be a matter of good advice, or a theme to be expressed in good music, or overloaded with what is bright and beautiful to conceal its bareness. If the religion of the Jew, which was the shadow of good things to come, was a religion of great obligations, much more will the religion of the Christian, which deals with the substance, be reared up on strong obligations also.

A religion which costs nothing and is easy gives the lie to the second great division of the Creed, for it shows that he who professes it has not taken the trouble to master the mystery which underlies the simple facts which are there threaded together in a string of consecutive importance.

Besides this seriousness which has been described, a man to whom the Creed is a reality will be exhibiting something of the strength of Christ's Sacrifice. Ezra said of old, that it was idle to profess belief in the protecting hand of God, and at the same time to ask for the material help which the king was ready to afford him;[1] and so in like manner it ill becomes those who believe in the efficacy of Christ's Sacrifice, who believe that it was 'for us men and for our salvation' that Christ came down from heaven, to show signs of weakness. This cannot be the attitude of those whose daily Prayer is this, 'We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.'[2] One of Satan's most effective weapons is fear. There are hundreds of men and women falling a prey

[1] Ezra viii. 22. [2] Book of Common Prayer, *Te Deum*.

to his wiles, not by reason of anything that is, but from fear of what might be. The devil, exercising his characteristic influence, loosens the hold of the Christian on the different sources of strength which are open to him, either by a subtle disparagement or a downright opposition, until only failure and disappointment remain. Despair is causing the overthrow of many a champion of God at the present day. Despair of goodness in the face of organised evil; despair of nobility of character in the presence of the low tone which pervades society; despair of success when everywhere first principles seem to be giving way; despair of finding leaders, where the path is strewed with the bodies of fallen warriors. Whereas a real belief in Jesus Christ the Lord, and in the power of His Sacrifice, ought to make such an attitude impossible. God reigns in His own world, He is where He was before the perplexing mist settled down over the face of the world, and the theatre of our action. There has no strange thing happened to us but such as is common to man. When that great mystery took place, of which we now joyously sing in the confident tones of our Creed, when Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, Roman civilisation stood aloof from an event which, without dispute, has revolutionised the world, in complete ignorance and indifference as to that which was nothing else than the turning-point or hinge of history. When Rome became conscious of Christ it was to crucify Him; when it became confronted with Christianity it was to endeavour to extirpate it as a degraded superstition. The religious world was no less indifferent, and afterwards no less hostile, all the preparation of God seemed to have failed, the laborious building-up of the chosen race as the shrine of the Incarnation seemed to have failed. The people of God were apostate and faithless, the sceptre had departed from Judah, and the Law-giver from between his feet; when

Christ came unto His own His own received Him not; the expectation of Israel was represented by a handful of old men and women, mere reactionary relics of the past as they appeared; the very genealogy of the Messiah seemed tainted, of the three women there recorded, one was an alien, and two were sinners. And so the cause of God has gone on. Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called, the truth of God may at times have been considered the peculiar property of slaves and outcasts; the glorious promises of the Gospel again and again seemed to shrivel up in the utterly incongruous result which they produced in the lives of men; and so it continues to be, men boast of the freedom proclaimed and secured by the gospel, and they are everywhere in chains. Men's hearts fail them for fear, even while they proclaim their belief in the strength of Christ's Sacrifice. And yet there can be no doubt that the strength is there, the stream of redemption seems to disappear and plunge into the earth, but soon it emerges again. There is what men call a movement, the ecclesiastical apathy of the middle ages is flooded by the earnestness of the preaching Friars; the utter deadness of the eighteenth century in England is quickened by the outburst of Evangelical fervour, and the nineteenth is roused by the earnestness and vitality of a movement beginning at Oxford, almost as despised and thwarted as Christianity itself; as with the Church and nation so with the individual, men are startled with what they call a conversion; in the Providence of God, it is but the stream of His redemptive grace surging up to find the level from which it sprang. Perhaps the sense of strength which underlies the profession of our belief in Christ is the motive which is needed more than any other to help us to face the prevailing despair and the sense of failure which paralyses effort, and produces public panic and private cowardice. 'Strong

Son of God' is still the passionate cry of those who believe in a Saviour, and who refuse to believe it possible that help should be denied to those whom Christ has purchased with His precious Blood. It is but to extend this confidence of belief a little further that the Christian should feel and act as one who knows that the effect of the Sacrifice of Christ in which he believes is a present active power in full operation in his own life.

The Christian who professes his belief in Christ is not only a serious man and a strong man, but he is a forgiven man. The conscience which makes cowards of us all may be soothed and comforted by the present efficacy of Christ's atoning Sacrifice. And for the man who goes about his work cowed and beaten by sin there can be no real belief in the power of the Sacrifice of the death of Christ and of the benefits which we receive thereby. Every thinking being must look with thankfulness and wonder at the gigantic strides made by modern surgery in dealing with human disease and the results of accident. He would receive scant pity who spent his life nourishing a disabling impotence which a trifling surgical operation would remove. So to compare God's great gifts to the life of the human body with His greater gifts to the life of the human soul, it would ill become one who professes his belief in the power of Christ's redemptive Blood to pass through life unrelieved, unhealed, and unforgiven. Spiritual surgery, to speak with reverence, has been revolutionised by the Atonement. Spiritual operations are now possible, which before could not be attempted with any hope of success. The redemptive power of the Cross has been concentrated for us into certain great acts of sovereign efficacy, one of which has already been considered in Holy Baptism, a second of which must be considered later in Holy Communion, and a third is known as Absolution, not indeed incident to

all, and, unlike the other two, not generally necessary to salvation, and which will in its turn form the subject of a separate volume in this series.

It is not that confession is not necessary for every one. Every one must confess his sins to God, who wishes to be forgiven; but the use of the spiritual doctor is not forced upon any one; although in an unhealthy climate like the world, so far from it being undesirable constantly to take medicine, the constant use of confession to God, with or without the doctor, is as necessary as the constant use of drugs to a man living on a fever-stricken marsh. It is one of the misfortunes incident to controversy, that men have been led to fix their eyes on the bitterness of confession rather than on the unspeakable benefit of Absolution. They have thought more of the medicine than the cure. But here, to those who have experienced the wonderful strength of God's pardoning grace conveyed in Absolution, is an extension of the Redemption into his daily life which renders more fervent the expression of his belief in Jesus his Redeemer. Here is an evidence of power within the region of experience, which lights up with a fresh glow the simple expression of his belief in a Saviour Who has redeemed him and all mankind.

And so it is with that other store-house of redemptive-grace—the Holy Communion. No one ought to remain a slave to sin and burdened with guilt within reach of that Blessed Sacrament. For God, 'to the end that we should alway remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which, by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained to us . . . hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort.'[1] In this Holy Sacrament we have not only a mighty witness, in

[1] Book of Common Prayer, 'Holy Communion.'

the unbroken tradition of the Church, to the truth of those articles of the Creed which express our belief in the redemptive death of Christ, but we have also a living exhibition of its present power, an active belief in which renders the dominion of sin within us impossible.

But the belief in Jesus Christ carries us one step further: it not only enables a man to profit by the great sacrifice of the Cross, the fruits of which have passed into his life, it also brings him face to face with an example, not an ideal portrait of what might have been, but an actual representation of a life which really existed in the form of humanity. A belief in Jesus Christ pledges a Christian to an imitation, however feeble it may be, of that life which exhibited, once for all, the perfection which might be attained by a man with a body, mind, and spirit constituted in the way we know, Who adapted Himself to the habits of a fallen world, exhibiting the only possible methods of a return to perfection in conditions rendered dangerous and difficult by Adam's transgression. We are familiar with many modes and suggestions for the fuller imitation of Christ. 'What would Christ have done?' is pressed as a formula, sometimes with disastrous results, by those who have not realised the principles, as far as we may know them, which seem to have governed the actions of the perfect Man. Certainly we may see two principles which a belief in Him entails on those who profess it; the one is a complete detachment from all the long tale of acquisitiveness which has marked the progress of Adam's children, who have followed his ideal of happiness in seizing and acquiring anything and everything which gives promise of immediate satisfaction of appetite or a prospective acquirement of worldly wisdom; and the other is a deliberate attachment to all the minute requirements which God has laid down in the world as the embodiment of His

will for man. Not even a superficial observer can fail to notice that the liberty of the perfect Man was maintained in constant and minute obedience to a law which was imperfect in itself, and to religious observances which represented to Him places where man could stand before God, and points of contact between earth and Heaven. A man who believes in the second great division of the Creed will exhibit a life, not necessarily fantastically adapted to the conditions of existence in Judæa in the first century of the Christian era, but suited to the conditions of this world, which never vary, in so far as it is a fallen and therefore a dangerous world. And pre-eminently, therefore, he will turn himself away from anything that might entangle him, while he studies with earnestness those regulations imposed from on high, assisted by which he may pass through the shifting circumstances of the road of life protected by the power in which he has learned to believe.

III

In the third place the life of a Christian will exhibit the characteristics of one who believes himself to be endowed with the Holy Ghost. The creed to which the Christian is pledged binds him to regard himself not only as made by a loving Father, and redeemed by a powerful Saviour, but also as sanctified by the Holy Ghost together with all those who are the elect people of God.[1] So the privileges become closer; 'all the world,' 'all mankind' become narrowed down into 'the elect people of God,' those who are called into His Church for the reception of special blessings, which they hold in trust to distribute to every creature; to all the world.

[1] See on this phrase, Robinson, *The Church Catechism Explained*, p. 43.

The belief in the Holy Ghost pledges a man to exhibit the supernatural power of the Church as the instrument of his sanctification, a sense of fellow-citizenship with the saints, the blessedness of a life of non-imputed sin, and the aspirations of immortality in the godliness which has the promise of the life which now is and of that which is to come. In another volume of this series an attempt has been made to describe in a rough sketch the divine society known as the Church,[1] which is holy because the Holy Spirit works in it; and yet, although this is the chief, it is not by any means the only region in which the Christian becomes conscious of this sacred influence and Divine Presence.

There are certainly four regions in which we are accustomed to trace the power of the Holy Spirit. There is this world of beauty all around us, in the order and laws of which we are invited to see the handiwork of Him Who once brooded over chaos at the beginning. 'The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world: and that which containeth all things hath knowledge of the voice;'[2] there is the region of conscience, on which we have dwelt at some length above; there is the inspired page of Holy Scripture, in which we are accustomed to trace the real presence of the Holy Ghost; and there is the divine society, known as the Church, with its four marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, and Apostolic foundation. Out of each and all of these regions there is ever passing into the heart of the believer the sanctification which is the distinguishing mark of one who not only has heard that there is a Holy Ghost, but has actually received Him.

We all of us profess to believe that certainly at two great periods in our lives the Holy Ghost came to dwell with us, and be in us: at our Baptism and at our

[1] *Religion*, chap. xi. [2] Wisdom i. 7.

Confirmation. These may represent two parts of one action, and two separate modes of approach of the Blessed Spirit,[1] but the result is described for us by S. Paul—that we have become temples of the Holy Spirit.[2] And it is always to be remembered that these are not two solitary and isolated events in the past, but that they are of living and permanent consequence in the present. A baptized man can never be as though he had never been baptized, and Confirmation is never repeated. Baptism is a sacrament that gives character, and Confirmation is the complement of Baptism. And therefore a belief in the Holy Ghost which is real ought to be exhibiting in life the permanent effects of an indwelling Spirit. In my Baptism I was born again, I received there the capacity for holiness; here all my natural endowments were spiritualised; not only were bad tendencies kept under, or at least put under control, but they were made capable of being utilised by a spiritually developed will. Here the disabling powers of heredity were met, recognised, and turned into powers of good, so that I could go forward still with my own endowment, and the characteristics of my own personality, but vitalised and endowed with power from on High.

So in my Confirmation I received a gift of strength in view of that which God might see fit to put upon me, in view of the never-ceasing machinations of Satan and in view of my own weak nature. I received the gift of strength. I became an anointed king over the province where God set me. I became sealed for His purpose and marked for His own possession. And to believe in this is to exhibit a strength and firmness in life, a pride of possession, an endowment of strength which sharply marks off the baptized and confirmed Christian as one of the chosen recipients of God's especial favour. And

[1] See *Holy Baptism* and *Confirmation* in this series.
[2] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

so out of these other regions also, the Holy Spirit in Whom we believe will be manifested. The sacramental indwelling of the Holy Ghost is unique, and transcends all other manifestations of His power, yet we ought also to be examples of those who are instructed and made wise by His guidance. English people are apt to be a little insincere in this respect. They make it their boast that they have access to an open Bible, in which they believe that they can hear the word of God. Any endeavour to deprive them of this right would be keenly resented, and with justice, and yet but little use is being made of the Bible as a devotional book; the claim to treat it as you would treat any other book is depriving it of the reverence hitherto bestowed upon it; eagerness to understand the conundrums of critics supersedes the eagerness to listen to the message of God. It becomes of comparatively little importance to study devotionally a book which presents no points of solid superiority to the sacred books of other ancient religions. The devotional use of the Old Testament Scriptures by our Blessed Lord alone might lead many to seek the same source of help for their spiritual life. The commentary has yet to be written in which is exhibited the part which different books and different verses even of Holy Scripture have played in the lives and destinies of men. Those who are accustomed to its frequent and ordered use know something of the strange and mysterious appropriateness with which it identifies itself with the sequence of events both public and private in human life. There is no doubt whatever that by constant spiritual intercourse with God in Holy Scripture a particular grace and beauty passes into the soul. It was said of the late Dr. Liddon, 'His life was a clear channel, down which the news of a life of grace might pass to us without derision. Can there be a better test of the spiritual sincerity of a man than this, that

we feel no shock when he speaks to us in Bible language?'[1]

So in the life guided by conscience, so in the life of reverence lived in the felt presence of the majesty of God, we may proclaim our belief in the Holy Ghost Who sanctifies, that Power which comes like the rushing wind from an unknown quarter, subtle and penetrating, filling the whole house we inhabit.

It is not a little cheering to notice amidst much that might cause depression, and even despair, how goodness still holds its own as the great appealing power of the world. It stands out conspicuously in the life of our late sovereign, Victoria; amidst her many excellences and gifts her goodness makes its supreme appeal to the homage and gratitude of mankind. Those memories which seem most likely to survive out of the traditions of famous men which they have left behind them seem to be the memories of goodness which remain where the reputation for greatness, as the world counts greatness, has died out.

A man is false to his pledged faith when he shrinks from meeting the force of evil with the forces of goodness. Spiritual pride, cant, hypocrisy are all ugly names from which we shrink, but He who told us to do good in secret also told us to let our light so shine before men that they might see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

It is a bad sign when good men shrink from posts of responsibility, when good men shrink from the witness which may mean martyrdom in its most sinister signification. No doubt it will be with any good man, as it was with our Blessed Lord, that He cannot be hid; but apart from this the duty remains of using the power of influence which is given by the belief in God, in the conflict with evil which is ever raging in the world.

[1] H. Scott Holland.

A man who believes in the Fatherhood of God believes in the truth of his own mission, and in the importance of his personal message. A man who believes in the Redemptive power of God moves unharmed amidst the perils and temptations which he knows to be powerless to entrap him; while if he believes in the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit he will refuse to be paralysed by the doctrine of human corruption, but will ever press on to exhibit in his own life that excellence of which he knows himself to be capable, in the power of the triune God Whom he knows, and in Whom he has believed.

PART III

THE COMMANDMENTS

Question. You said, that your godfathers and godmothers did promise for you, that you should keep God's commandments. Tell me how many there be?

Answer. Ten.

Question. Which be they?

Answer. The same which God spake in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, saying, I am the Lord thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

I. Thou shalt have none other gods but me.

II. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love Me, and keep My commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain.

IV. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

V. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt do no murder.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.

Question. What dost thou chiefly learn by these commandments?

Answer. I learn two things: my duty towards God, and my duty towards my neighbour.

Question. What is thy duty towards God?

Answer. My duty towards God is to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength: to worship Him, to give Him thanks, to put my whole trust in Him, to call upon Him, to honour His Holy Name and His Word, and to serve Him truly all the days of my life.

Question. What is thy duty towards thy neighbour?

Answer. My duty towards my neighbour, is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me: to love, honour, and succour my father and mother: to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him: to submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters: to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters: to hurt nobody by word nor deed: to be true and just in all my dealings: to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart: to keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering: to keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity: not to covet nor desire other men's goods, but to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.

CHAPTER I

PRACTICE

God's fashion is another; day by day
And year by year He tarrieth: little need
The Lord should hasten; whom He loves the most
He seeks not oftenest nor woos him long;
But by denial quickens his desire
And in forgetting best remembers him,
Till that man's heart grows humble, and reaches out
To the least glimmers of the feet of God,
Grass on the mountain tops, or the early note
Of wild-birds before the day—
Wherever sweetly in the ends of earth
Are fragments of a peace, that knows not man.

The renunciation of evil, and the definite acceptance of God on the part of the baptized, have now been examined as showing what was involved in the pledge imposed upon us by the Church in the persons of our god-parents. We received a great blessing from God, and on our part we made some far-reaching promises whose influence extends into the most remote regions of faith and conduct.

It remains now to examine the third of those promises, by which we were sent forth pledged not only to renounce all that God hates, and to believe all that He teaches, but also to do all that He wills.

If in the wide region of faith we were able to lean on the expressed tradition of the Church, as to the things which we ought most surely to believe to our soul's health, so in the equally wide field of practice

the laws of God's kingdom are codified for us into certain broad principles promulgated by God Himself at a period of dread solemnity, with every circumstance of awe to emphasise their obligation; and further, as if to show us that the divine sanction still rested upon them under the freer laws of the Christian kingdom, certain specimens of the old law are taken up and expounded in the Sermon on the Mount, and the obligation is carried further still into the region of thought and motive where human cognisance does not reach, nor human penalties run.

An effort is now being made by those who habitually disparage the Old Testament to represent the Ten Commandments as certain crude human enactments imposed by Moses on a people of low moral capacity, enforced by sanctions, where enforced at all, which were based on low conceptions of temporal rewards and punishments. We are bidden to turn away from them, with their stern negative prohibitions, to the freer light of the Beatitudes and the spiritual commands of the gospel. Attention is drawn to the supposed disparagement implied in the words of Christ, 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time': 'but I say unto you,'[1] as if a contrast was there being drawn between a mistaken human ordinance and a divine injunction. But, in the first place, we ought almost certainly to read: 'it was said *to* them [not '*by* them'] of old time.' The promulgator of the Law of Sinai and the law of the Beatitudes, and of the divine sermon, is one and the same Lord. The fuller precept contains the less full, and does not abolish it, and the murder of an angry thought does nothing to abrogate the murder of a violent hand. Further, an attitude of contemptuous criticism, and a proud disregard for anything based on a system of rewards and punishments, meets with no sanction in the pages of the Prayer Book with

[1] S. Matt. v. 27, 28.

which we are now concerned. Every child who is handed back to the parents and god-parents from the Font is pledged to learn by heart the Ten Commandments given by God on Sinai in all their entirety, subsidised but not superseded by other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health. Further, every time he is present at the Holy Eucharist he hears read as a lection from the Old Testament, with accompanying responds, the portion of Exodus which contains these commandments. When he is preparing himself for confession, he is bidden to examine himself by 'the rule of God's commandments.'[1] In former days it was customary, in obedience to a canon still not obsolete, to set up the tables of the Law in Churches; and Dr. Liddon has said with truth that 'the Ten Commandments are at this moment the moral rule of Christendom, and contain in a compendious form an exhaustive statement of human duty towards the Author of our being, and towards our fellow-creatures.' Father Coleridge has also well said: 'They [the commandments] set forth certain principles of the eternal law of morality by taking them, as it were, at the lowest possible point at which their violation sinks to the level of direct grievous sin of the most obvious and unquestionable heinousness.'[2]

As the Creed is the Creed adapted to the needs of a fallen man, so the Law which enforces his obedience is designed in the interests of those who in understanding are children and in malice are men. Generations of Christian children have grown up to maturity, generations of men have passed to their last account, grateful for the Law of God, whose stern prohibition has been best adapted to the weakness of their moral resistance.

[1] Book of Common Prayer, 'Holy Communion.'
[2] Father Coleridge, *The Public Life of our Lord*, vol. ii. p. 142.

The Catechism sharply divides the ten laws of God into two divisions, which it will be necessary to consider later under their respective summaries, as containing the duty of a man to his God, and his duty to his neighbour.

The first four commandments are to be committed to heart by every baptized Christian, as containing for him four distinct attitudes which are of obligation to him in dealing with the Lord his Maker. The struggles and failures of Israel of old in keeping these commandments, the conditions which rendered their imposition necessary, are still eloquent to him. The things which happened to Israel of old 'happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.'[1]

I

Of these four the first law sets up with unmistakable emphasis the form of God as the dominating principle of a man's life. Once more it must be insisted upon that man is not at liberty to cast about and dabble in Atheism, Pantheism, or Agnosticism, or whatever takes his fancy.

'Thou shalt have a God' stands forth with startling prominence at the forefront, not only of his life of faith, but of his life of practice.

It would seem to be a perpetual, or at least a recurring, danger in all generations that men should forget God. It was this danger that underlay the whole system of memorials with which the life of a Jew was surrounded, that he might be led on from the thought of what God had done to the expectation of that which He was ready to do.

When there is so much to make us forget God, there

[1] 1 Cor. x. 11.

is but little chance of His presence retaining its rightful position, unless each day has consecrated portions, each week at least one consecrated day, to proclaim by their recurrence the sense of an abiding, ever-present God. It is so easy in every station of life to forget God. The labourer who is face to face with the ordered laws of nature may very soon become a fatalist in his submission to the inevitable sequence of cause and effect, and believe in the direction of the wind, or the power of sun, or the influence of rain, rather than in the immanent interposition of God, Who sits enthroned on order and is upheld by law. There seems to be a peculiarly deadening influence in trade, which makes us wonder when we see how the call of Christ, once at all events, penetrated to the receipt of custom. The rich man and the scientific man are both apt to live as those who have found a world in which they can trace no necessity for the interference of God. The very service of God may become so mechanical as to interpose a barrier of formalism between God and the souls of those who by profession are supposed to be most interested in His service.

The child who has learned the true meaning of this commandment which he has promised to keep, goes forth into the world as one who is pledged at least to this—to have a God. It meets him at the very outset of his career; he steps into rank as one who has been called to occupy a post, and not merely to amuse himself with a game of chance, in which his interest is to be ever on the side of fortune. The days as they come, the temptations as they approach, the troubles as they threaten, the advantages as they smile upon him, all form to him a part of a rich experience which he can use in the service of God.

To have a God gives a dignity to life which nothing else can supply. There are times when God manifestly interposes, and the best laid schemes of men are seen

to fail before the working of a hidden power. But the Christian is pledged not merely to recognise these interpositions, which cannot well be denied, but in all his ways to acknowledge God, in the confidence that He will be found ready at hand to direct his paths.

The scope of the obligation of this commandment goes even further. If there is a danger of having no God at all, there is a danger of having another God other than the true God.

A man may regulate his life by a constant appeal to the approval of Almighty God; or he may guide his cause by the approbation or disapproval of some other power, which he makes the supreme arbiter of his actions. Public opinion, the verdict of the public conscience, may very easily take the place of the allegiance due to Almighty God. Public opinion is not a thing to be despised. In the form of tradition it is entitled to veneration and respect, in the form of proverb and maxim it often represents the common-sense of the world, and the rich accumulation of that result of experience which is most worth preserving; as propriety or rules of conduct, again, it may well represent a barrier which prudence has raised between the ordinary life of man and the habitual dangers wherewith it is beset. No one can afford to be indifferent to the state of feeling around him, even to the prejudices of those with whom he is thrown. But the pledge of the baptized binds him down to maintain in all the absolute supremacy of God. If public tradition decrees that the law of the king must override the religious obligation of divine worship, Daniel may not hesitate for a moment, even if the den of lions be the punishment of his refusal. Pilate, whatever be the state of feeling at court, must feel that safety may not be bought at the price of injustice. The child of God goes forth pledged to the absolute supremacy of God in the face of adverse public opinion—God first as

the absolute claimant of an unswerving loyalty; and he learns to push by the fear of ridicule which besets him as a child, the promise of advantage which meets him as a man, to reach forth to those posts of eminence which God reserves for those who have learned to stand alone, or who have realised that God, and God only, is to be feared, and not the fleeting supremacy of a bad public opinion.

The Christian is pledged even further than this. He must have a God, he must have the true God, and he must have but one God. There is a constant danger which besets a man of having two Gods, a Sunday God and a week-day God; One God Who rules in this set of circumstances, and Another Who rules in that. Inconsistency is the besetting sin of good people, and inconsistency is the sin of those whose life is lived under a divided allegiance. The aim of the Christian is to bring all his life under a unity of obligation; whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, to do all to the glory of God. God always, God only, God everywhere, is the end of this commandment for every one who has pledged himself to keep it, and to forget its solemn obligation is to inflict on life an irreparable loss. When a man has lost God out of life, then he begins to feel the peculiarity of his position and the irksomeness of his restraints. When the Israelite ceased to feel his privilege as the son of God, there only remained his singularity as one of a peculiar people. The distinctions between clean and unclean, the prohibition to multiply horses, the minute ceremonial, the ordered ritual, became only badges of servitude. 'Let us be as the other nations' not only represented a loss of faith, it represented a loss of privilege. Ceasing to love the thing which God commanded, they failed to desire that which He promised. To be without God in the world speedily turns away the face of a man from his promised land, and he

foregoes the milk and honey which are the reward of warfare, for the fleshpots of Egypt, which mean slavery with satiety.

II

The Law of the love of God is imposed on the Christian with still further obligations. Not only is he bound to the service of a God the object of his one and only allegiance, but he is further bound to give to this God that which he gives to no other being in the scale of creation, and to give it in the right way. God Almighty demands the worship of His creatures, and every true Christian is pledged from his new birth at the Font to the due and rational performance of this worship.[1] It may well be doubted whether this attitude of the creature to his Creator is taking its proper place, not among the accessories, but in the forefront of the obligations of human life. The language here employed concerning it is extremely suggestive, even startling, and contains for us the will of the Almighty to guide our thoughts and practice in so important a matter. God represents Himself as craving our worship with a desire whose intensity can best be expressed in the language of human passion. Worship misdirected arouses in the heart of Almighty God a feeling akin to that experienced by a human heart which is jealous of a rival. In no other commandment, except the third, is God's wrath so denounced against those who disregard its prohibition. A punishment which lingers on to the third and fourth generation is not obscurely threatened against those who violate it. The value, then, attached to this commandment, at least by implication, prepares us to receive with less astonishment the fact that it is a spiritual sin, in the New

[1] See on this subject, *Religion*, by the Author, chap. xii., vol. i. o this series.

Testament, which is pre-eminently overshadowed with the wrath of God. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, a sin so subtle and remote, as to be even imperfectly defined in human consciousness, is singled out as the one sin of which we may even despair of forgiveness.[1]

There are other indications in Holy Scripture which suggest a continuity of treatment in this matter both in the Old and New Testament.

The judgment on Uzzah for an act of irreverent haste is deeply significant;[2] and the punishment of Uzziah for profanity seems to have connected itself in the mind of the prophet Isaiah with the mystery of divine worship as it was revealed to him.[3] We remember that our Blessed Lord cleansed the Temple twice over, once at the beginning and once at the end of His ministry, and how in point of fact the indignation aroused by this action was the immediate precedent cause to His loss of popularity and His death.[4] Later on in the history of the Church we find irregularities of worship in connection with the Holy Eucharist the cause of serious manifestations of divine displeasure in the Corinthian Church.[5] So that it is quite open to a Christian to-day to wonder whether he has sufficiently gauged the extent of his obligations in this respect, involved in his old Baptismal pledge: as he gazes at the hundreds of religious denominations, some with this and some with that form of worship, some with no worship at all; as he listens to the contemptuous expressions of those who regard themselves as superior to any such exercises of devotion, he may well ponder over these solemn utterances and eloquent actions, and look to his own worship, and see if his heart is right in this respect towards God. Worship is evidently a good deal more than prayer; public worship is something

[1] S. Luke xii. 10. [2] 2 Sam. vi. 6. [3] 2 Chron. xxvi. 21.
[4] S. Luke xix. 45. [5] 1 Cor. xi. 30.

greater than the common recitation of private prayers in public. Worship is rather the expression of the conformity of the human will to God's will in glad adoration; the offering made by a rational creature endued with free will of that which is offered unconsciously by the irrational creation in conformity to the instinct or tendency of their being and growth. And worship will be therefore always a difficult matter, and will advance a serious claim on the self-sufficiency and obedience of man, that he should be asked to sacrifice so much time and energy on a Being Who is out of sight, thereby expressing indebtedness and dependence on Another Whom many find it possible to ignore with impunity, at least up to a certain point, and Whose requirements cut right across the self-confident materialism of a self-satisfied age.

It is well that the Christian should realise in time, that which the terrible sanction imposed upon this commandment might suggest, that in promising to keep this law of God, he has promised a hard thing. Worship most clearly demands a threefold capacity in him who would exercise himself in it, and be true to his plighted word. Worship presupposes in the worshipper a spiritual, moral, and intellectual capacity for his task.

A man may fail in his worship, until he give it up from very weariness, because he has done nothing to cultivate a spiritual capacity for it. The history of idolatry is a melancholy one, because men have failed, and do fail again and again, to see how closely the tendency to idolatry is bound up with human nature, and how inevitably the tendency, unless resisted, leads to an intellectual and even moral degradation as complete as the degradation of the sensualist and the drunkard.

In the very face of Almighty God, within the echo of the voice of Sinai, there was a tendency to calf worship, with all the degradation involved in that cult.

And if the reason is sought for, the answer is obvious, indeed it is involved in the excuse advanced for the idolatry. The worship of a material image at hand is easier than the worship of an immaterial God remote in the Heavens. 'Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.'[1] The spiritual strain of worshipping the Unseen will always be great. And the Christian who would perform his obligation to worship will have no chance unless he has accustomed himself for shorter or longer periods to breathe the rarefied air of Heaven. Even apostles fell asleep on the Mount of Transfiguration, and failed to assist at the unfolding of the mystery of the Agony in Gethsemane. The mere spiritual strain of feeling God's presence will always be great; it will always be easier to rest in some material substitute for Him, and never to reach beyond the accessories of divine worship to the cloud-enwrapped throne circled by the veiled Cherubim. The worship of God in the substance of our flesh when He became incarnate was not only legitimate, it was obligatory. The worship of Christ in His Eucharistic manifestation of His presence, can never be idolatrous, for Christ, wherever He is, is to be worshipped. But it may become possible even to abuse this gift so as to be incapable of feeling out after God, unless we have some visible point of contact with His presence. Worship should become to the Christian an habitual attitude, not an occasional exercise. There is a fragment of truth in Pantheism together with much error. The personal God of the Christian, Who is distinct from all His creatures, yet manifests Himself beneath the Sacrament of Creation, and being everywhere, is everywhere adored.

There is obviously a need also to develop a moral capacity for worship. Our Blessed Lord has told us

[1] Exodus xxxii. 1.

of the purity of vision which is rewarded with the sight of God. It is not hard to discover beneath this gracious promise of beatitude a damnatory clause which threatens admitted sin.

There is no vision of God vouchsafed in the presence of the barrier of moral guilt. The worship of the calf is not far removed from the licentious dance at the foot of the mount: and the licentious dance explains the easy transition from the awe-struck terror which surrounded Sinai to the senseless worship of the work of their own hands, and the product of their own inanimate ornaments. The loneliness produced by sin is responsible for the misdirected worship of idolatry. And it is not an uncommon thing to find that people who have forgotten God in a life of sensuous ease, and yet have not finally parted with their higher aspirations and capacities, are driven to console themselves with the puerilities and profanities, and even dangers of spiritualism; having lost the moral capacity for true worship, they console themselves with a dangerous and illicit peering into the unseen, and dance around the calf which their own hands have made.

Neither must it be forgotten that worship makes a demand on the intellectual powers as well. It requires a good deal of the energy which is now expended on business and the more exacting pursuits of the day, in order rightly to develop the capacity for worship. He who would worship God aright must have learned how to endure mental fatigue, how to manage his thoughts, how to concentrate his efforts, and direct the power of the will. Worship suffers very much from the fact that it is supposed to be an easy exercise of untrained effort, to be undertaken without preparation, and persevered in without labour, and the meagre result chills and drives back the aspiration of the man, who never feeling after God has never found Him, and goes on his way in all the bareness of an existence which has

parted with the refinements, the exaltation, and beauty of worship.

The stress of this command would however seem chiefly to lie in those words 'Make to thyself.' The making of images in itself was not forbidden to the Jew, who by the direct command of God placed images of Cherubim in the most Holy Place, and afterwards in the Temple was accustomed even to images of oxen. Much less to a Christian is the making of any human semblance forbidden, for in the Incarnate Son of God we have seen a similitude. But the making objects of idolatry, the providing for worship in a wrong and unauthorised manner, comes under the sternest prohibition of this law of God. Worship is no easy and haphazard arrangement, but is a matter of very definite order and of great importance. The worship of the Church is based on the direct command of our Lord and Saviour, Who in the night before He suffered, instituted and ordained holy mysteries for perpetual obligation laid upon all believers.

The Holy Eucharist is not a form of worship which might conceivably have been otherwise ordered, but is linked in with the very worship of Heaven, and would seem to be a part of the divine economy, and therefore it is not open to any one without censure either to forsake, alter, or omit the ordered worship of the Church; neither will he be tempted, with this commandment before his eyes, to think divine worship to be an easy, light, or unimportant matter, but will feel that to part with worship is to part with the fear of God out of his life, and is to incur the displeasure of Him Who is a jealous God.

III

In the Third Commandment the Christian finds himself pledged, still under the same awful obligations

as before, and still in the same indefinite region, where the censure of the world is slight in a matter which has to do with an attitude of the soul towards its Maker. 'Thou shalt not bring or lift up the Name of the Lord thy God to a vanity.' This commandment stands, without doubt, as a great barrier against irreverence; that which, perhaps more than anything else, is the besetting sin of an advanced and advancing age; which has but little recognition of anything great with a greatness greater than itself; which is not too ready to recognise the hand of the Lord, and which is not unduly sensitive to the awe of His presence. There stands out very conspicuously in this commandment that designation which is so frequently to be met with in Holy Scripture—The Name of God. It is taken into the very heart of Christian teaching by our Blessed Lord, Who makes it the subject of His commission to His Church. 'Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'[1]

In the Name of God we recognise 'certain revelations of Himself which He has made to man; certain discoveries of Himself which represent to man just as much as he is able to apprehend of the divine nature.' The Name of God which He in His condescension has imparted to man at certain points of his history represent certain liftings up of the veil between earth and heaven, points of observation for man, points of veneration, almost points of worship; so that the Name of God would seem in the challenge made to our reverence to stand for God Himself.[2]

The Christian is pledged at his Baptism by the terms

[1] S. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.
[2] Bp. Westcott: S. John i. 12.

of this commandment to adopt a certain attitude towards this revealed Name. He promises, in effect, that he will never lift it up in vain or misuse it. This is a danger into which it is only too easy to fall. It is possible to slight or pass by a Name of God, which has been revealed to man, in preference for an aspect of God, which has been attained by speculation and human conjecture. It has been already pointed out that it is quite impossible for a Christian to be content with a religious acknowledgment of God which reposes simply on His Fatherhood, without any recognition of Him as Saviour and Sanctifier. The confident claims advanced by what is called undenominational religion are in direct defiance of this commandment. For that which God has revealed can never in the smallest particular be an indifferent matter to the Christian; to hear and to reject, to receive a revelation of the Name of God and to put it on one side, is to lift that Holy Name up to a vanity, and to despise the loving condescension of the Lord.

But all his life through the Christian will feel the pressure of this pledge. Having promised to reverence God as his Father, he is constantly tempted to flout His providence. He nourishes and maintains serious sins and defects in the face of a nominal acceptance of the help of a Saviour, while sanctity is a condition which a careless life has emptied of its meaning by the profanity of unchastened actions. Obviously the pledge to keep this commandment bars the way to careless beliefs and dishonouring practice. It is a call to him who has promised to keep it, to remind him that he who names the Name of Christ must depart from iniquity.

But more intimately still the terms of this commandment bar the way to a definite sin, known as profanity. God in His tender compassion for our infirmities has exposed Himself to all the petty insults

of human ignorance. Nothing is easier than to insult God. The glory and honour which belong to His name lie like sunshine over certain things connected with His honour. Some of these will suggest themselves at once. There is the House wherein He has willed to place His name, the seat of His presence, the sanctuary of His worship. If there has been a marked improvement in reverence for the House of God since the days of the unspeakable profanities of 'Paul's walk,' there is still much to be desired. How little the ordinary Englishman seems to be able to realise the presence of God in the empty church, or the honour due to Him symbolised by the doffed hat and the outward respect imposed by conventional decency. Then there is Divine Service itself, over which is spread the glory of the Name of God, as to much of which it can only be said in excuse for the coldness, indifference, and listlessness of the worshippers, 'There standeth One among you, Whom ye know not.'[1] But more conspicuously still, there is one region in which the honour due to God is increasingly being withheld, and that is in the respect and reverence due to the Book which is called the Holy Bible, as being, in a way, unique and solemn, inspired by the Holy Ghost. There are abundant indications to show that the Bible is not receiving the reverence due to it from those who are pledged not to take the Name of God in vain. Scholars have seized upon it with avidity, as if it had been a closed library from which they had been too long excluded. The claim to treat it like any other book has been pushed to an extreme, so that it would be more true to say now that no other book is treated like the Bible. Holy Scripture is made a lesson book at school by those who do not always believe in it. It is read for its archæology, its poetry, its moral precepts rather than for itself as the Word of God. And hence

[1] S. John i. 26.

there has sprung up an increasing flippancy in the use of Bible words and Bible phrases which cannot be acquitted of the charge of profanity. Modern writers of fiction do not hesitate to use the most sacred words of Scripture in the lightest and most unworthy settings. There have been parodies even of the Lord's Prayer and parodies of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, some have suggested new Beatitudes, or used even the sayings of Gethsemane in a light and unworthy way. Nothing is cheaper or easier than to raise a laugh by a wrong use of Scripture. If there be any truth in the theory that laughter is produced by the sudden contrast between what is usual and what is abnormal, here will be a conspicuous example, where words and actions which have hitherto been treated with a supreme and singular veneration are dressed up in incongruous and unworthy accessories. The cheapness of the jest does not, however, diminish from its profanity. It can only do harm and make the world poorer and more unworthy, to dethrone from its pedestal, and to strip bare of the honour due to it, the Word of God which has been enthroned at the great councils of the church, and at the present day is treated with special Liturgical honour in the ceremonies which appertain to the reading of the Gospel in the service of the Altar. Surely a man who can only make himself merry at the expense of the Bible ought to feel that, being born without a sense of humour, he should not attempt to be witty. For it is one of the first principles of genuine humour to know the limits which shade themselves off through bad taste and vulgarity to profanity and utter unworthiness.

And so it will be felt that the prohibitions of this commandment reach even further still, and stop the way to all those offences against beauty which so easily develop themselves in those who have lost sight of God. It is one of the mysteries of iniquity, that in a world

of beauty such as this there should be a perfect cult of ugliness, moral, physical, and intellectual, on the part of those who are the votaries of sin. God surrounds the work of His creating and ordering love with beauty. The outgoings of the morning and evening praise Him. The birds and beasts, as they fulfil their several functions, minister to the beauty of the world, and fill the heaven with the melody of their unconscious hymn of praise to their Creator. Man walks beneath the canopy of a glorious heaven hung with the majesty of clouds, and treads upon the earth carpeted with grass and flowers. If God speaks to him and proclaims His great Name it is in words of awe and beauty filled with dignity and poetry. Those whom He inspires and dowers with His gifts are known to bring to an excellent work the God-given art which belongs to them. And yet in the face of this there is a perfect cult of ugliness. No one can walk through the streets of a great city, or linger long amidst any concourse of men, without being struck with the gratuitous and needless ugliness of words and ideas, in which God seems to be provoked with a reckless disregard for His presence, by that which seems to be a needless profanity. The obscenity and indignity of the language of the streets seem to pass into the flippant slang of higher *strata* of society. Books and plays and conversation vie with each other in stripping life of its dignity and emptying language of its beauty and robbing contemporary events of their significance and mystery.

Every Christian man who has roused himself to the sense of the pledge which he has made to keep this commandment must feel himself constrained to do something to stop the attacks which are being made on beauty which is the outward expression of the presence of God. It is not a little disquieting to know that there is an active *propaganda* of foul ugliness in our midst which is barely kept even within the bounds

of simple decency by a feebly administered law. Our schools, our streets, our homes, our book-stalls, are being attacked by the agents of evil, whose aim is to dethrone the God of beauty and to slay innocence and purity in the deadly overflowings of ungodliness.

He who would realise the extent of his promise must do something for public opinion in the interests of moral beauty. He must walk through the world as one who is conscious of the divine Presence, and of the duties which he owes to it. The Name of God must be honoured in His Church by all that beauty can do for it. In the pages of His holy Word, in the inner refinements of life, and everywhere must God be honoured, for He is everywhere. It is recorded in an appreciation of Archbishop Benson, written after his death, that he reproved a man with whom he was walking for lightly knocking off with his stick the bright buds of the bushes just bursting into beauty. 'Don't do that,' he said, 'it is breaking the third commandment.' Certainly one who has learned to feel that God is everywhere in the beautiful world of His creation will not need to be told of the awful sanctions which enforce the command of reverence. He will walk everywhere with bared head and careful foot, lest even unwittingly he should take the Name of God in vain.

IV

The law of the love of God receives a yet further amplification in a commandment which, originally given to the Jews, and invested by them with many enactments which were but provisional and temporary, still lingers on and is held to be binding, in principle at all events, on those who as Christians have been made obedient to the law, only as it is fulfilled in Christ.

The origin and meaning of the Christian Sunday has been discussed at some length in a preceding volume of this series.[1] It will be sufficient to say here, that our Lord Jesus Christ, when He proclaimed His Lordship over the Sabbath, did not profess absolutely to abolish it. He did away with that which was peculiar to the Mosaic treatment of the Sabbath, and much that had been added to it of human institution. He proclaimed that the law of the Sabbath was to be understood as including works of mercy and love, and as in the law of marriage so in the law of the Sabbath, He took men's minds back in thought to the time of its first promulgation, and proclaimed Himself Lord of the institution which God had made for the service of man. And so when we find the Christian Sunday appearing in the life of the early Church, apparently from its earliest start, when we see it mounting higher in the firmament and shedding off the mists which veil its first appearance, we feel that we are in the presence of no human invention, but of an institution which owes its origin either directly to Christ or indirectly to His inspiration, and that here is a day on which has descended the principle embodied in the now vanished Sabbath; that the Sunday with its different date in the week, its different underlying sanction, and its different observance, has yet taken over all that is permanent from the old Sabbath law; and that in it we have a new shoot on the old Sabbath root to the honouring of which we are pledged by our Baptismal vow in the terms of the Fourth Commandment.

This commandment obviously stands on a different footing to all the others, at its first promulgation it was liable to be challenged, and even more now its authority is questioned and disputed. It is a bit of positive Law embedded in the ten commandments. That is to say, a law whose sanction rests only on the

[1] Trevelyan, *Sunday*.

fact of its being enjoined by authority, not on any inner sanction of self-evident importance. The Sabbath was not enjoined upon the Jews because it represented a law of absolute right, but it became right to them to observe it because it was ordered. So now there are many who are willing to accept the law of Sunday as perhaps a wise and salutary regulation, but there are not so many who are willing to accept the observance as an obligation laid upon them under a sanction as strong as that which forbids them to steal or to commit murder.

The baptized Christian has to remember that in making this promise he is pledged to the principle of days of obligation, especially Sunday, as laid upon him by the Church; and that he submits to these injunctions not merely because he deems them to be salutary and can demonstrate the observance of them to be based on sound principles, but because an authority which has the power has laid this obligation upon him.

But at the same time it is only reasonable and wise to search for the underlying principles of this obligation, to see what are the permanent features which the Christian Sunday has taken over from the Jewish Sabbath, that with greater intelligence and more earnest zeal the Christian may maintain the integrity of that pledge whereby he has bound himself to observe God's Holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life.

The most obvious principle which manifests itself in this commandment is the importance of memorials in the system of duty and service which binds men to God. The Sabbath was designed to be a memorial in every week to ensure a due and thankful remembrance of God's blessings in creation, and of the deliverance of the Children of Israel out of the house of bondage. The Passover in the same way was a

yearly memorial of a great deliverance, Pentecost of a great treasure imparted in the giving of the Law, and the Feast of Tabernacles of a strong and unique national experience. So in the Christian Church there is designed to be a weekly memorial of the deliverance from the power of the grave effected by our Lord's resurrection; while the whole cycle of fast and festival is to men who are only too ready to forget, for a perpetual witness and memorial of the great facts of their Redemption. And this is only one side, and the least mysterious side, of the system of memorials. There is a Godward aspect as well as a manward aspect in memorials. God has willed it to be recorded that it is in accordance with His will that there should be definite and recurrent settings forth before Him of some of the great events in which His mercy and power have been displayed towards men; as if the memorial of them were a sort of obsecration and persuasive power whereby His love became quickened and renewed towards us.

We have indications of this mystery in the language put into the mouth of God with reference to the rainbow, 'I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.'[1] So it was with the Feast of Trumpets, it was to be 'a memorial of blowing of trumpets.'[2] Equally the rite of circumcision and the ordinance of the shewbread were charged with this memorial aspect before God; until we reach the consummation of this mystery in the Eucharistic Sacrifice which is designed to be a perpetual memory in the presence of God of the one great sacrifice once offered on Calvary.

There can be little doubt of the importance of memorials as regards man, in a life where there is so

[1] Gen. ix. 16. [2] Levit. xxiii. 24.

much to tempt him to forget; but it is only by long and patient waiting upon God that man may learn the mystery of the pleading before God, or understand how a neglected Sunday and an omitted Eucharist are in some way breaks in the ordered economy which connects God with man.

But there stands out even more clearly in this command which is bound upon the Christian, that he needs a pledge to secure to himself the very necessities of his being. Man by an enactment pledging him to rest is saved from a tendency to dissipate his powers by unrelieved labour. There is a principle of rest from labour, rest in order to labour which is very conspicuous in all sabbath institutions. Perhaps there is a great and increasing need that men should learn not only to rest, but also how to consecrate rest. Rest apart from God has become only another form of oppressive labour. The toilsome holidays in which recreation is pursued with hard toil to the ruin of happiness are but another indication of the restlessness which overtakes a heart which has forgotten God. The bank holidays, with their long hours of desperate labour after pleasure, are a poor substitute for the quiet rest of our old English Sundays and festivals. 'Blessed is the people, O Lord, that can rejoice in Thee.'[1] Many will agree that we have not learned as a nation, and find it hard as individuals, to take a holiday; and we forget that we are pledged by the author of our Being to make ourselves fit for His service by stated periods of consecrated rest.

And this brings out into prominence a still more important principle of Sabbath enactment, viz., the consecration of time. 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord Thy God.'[2] 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.'[3] All time belongs to God, but as God allowed the Levites to be set apart as representatives

[1] Psalm lxxxix. 16. [2] Exod. xx. 10. [3] Rev. i. 10.

of the firstborn of the consecrated nation, as God will accept a tithe as the representation of our ownership under Him of all property, so He accepts one day out of seven as representing the consecration of all the days of a man's life to His perfect service. It is an indication of a life which has broken away from God, that an effort should be made to deprive the Lord of that which is His peculiar portion, the proportion of time which has been dedicated to Him as a sign that He owns all. Consecrated men, consecrated space, consecrated time, consecrated property, this is what God seeks from His children. And the believing Christian pledges himself to nothing short of absolute allegiance, humble worship, devout reverence, and complete consecration, when he offers himself to the service of the Almighty.

CHAPTER II

PRACTICE

> The reader may have been surprised to find that the following of beauty brought him always under a sterner dominion of mysterious law, that brightness was continually based upon obedience, and all majesty only another form of submission. . . . The thing to be shown him was not a pleasure to be snatched, but a law to be learned.

We now reach the second division of God's commandments, including six which enjoin on us the law of the love of our neighbour. The child, while yet under tutors and governors, will find himself constantly drawn towards a greedy selfishness. It takes some time for one who is yet a stranger to the world in which he suddenly finds himself placed, to realise that others, even the lower animals, have their rights, and that all he sees around him is not merely so much material designed to administer to his amusement and satisfaction. As he grows up he becomes imbued with the spirit of competition and rivalry. That others should claim their rights means that so much possible advantage is being subtracted from the sum of his own welfare. And even at the last when the world and all it offers is slipping from his grasp, ambition, that last infirmity of noble minds, suggests to him that the demolition of the rights of others would leave a larger scope for his own interests and a greater

freedom for his own self-display, so that it is not without reason that the Church emphasises under the sanction of a solemn promise the law of God which protects our neighbour's rights, and does not leave it to the whim or the caprice of the individual, that his love should follow his inclination, but rather demands that it should follow that rule of justice which regards the whole world as our neighbour, and orders that we should love that neighbour as ourselves.

I

The first of these commandments which safeguard the right of our neighbour to our practical love extends its beneficent provisions over that early environment in which the young life first encounters rival claims and realises the substantial existence of a life apart from itself. The fifth commandment, both by its position, its terms, and its sanction, emphasises the extreme importance of home, and the abiding nature of the duties which have their root in its sacred enclosure.

There is much to lead us to suppose that we have in this commandment a precept which is embedded in the very heart of the well-being of the world. Its observance was vital to the Jew, that is obvious, and a matter of divine injunction. The peculiar government of the Jewish people rested on the basis of the family; the assertion of parental authority was necessary to the security of the State. The parents represented to the Israelite a system of religious education and the maintenance of the great tradition of God's dealings with His people, so that the very permanence of their existence, which was wrapped up in the promise of long life in the land of Canaan, depended on it. This is true and obvious, but when the precept passes

into the fuller stream of Christianity, there too it seems to assert itself with startling prominence amidst the very noblest precepts of the gospel. It is like a stream which colours throughout its course the river into which it flows, making its individuality felt amidst the full volume of the beauty of Christian character. Both by example and precept our Blessed Lord emphatically dignifies this commandment. All through His sojourn on earth He laid especial stress on the duties which are here safeguarded, and which have home for their centre. Out of the short span of years in which He willed to dwell on earth, thirty were spent under the sheltering cloud of home. And still at the supreme moment of the consummation of the sacrifice of Calvary, home finds a place in the solemn utterances of the Cross, and forms a part of the very canon of its Eucharistic mystery. As with His example, so with His words; His denunciation of the law of Corban, which He declared to be in violation of this vital precept, was severe and unmeasured; and in the stream of apostolic precept which flows from Him there emerges the injunction 'Children obey your parents in the Lord':[1] as if indeed we should not do wrong in transferring the hope of a long life in the promised land, to the fuller enjoyment of the Mansions of Heaven, as a reward for this commandment faithfully kept.

The supreme position occupied by this divine injunction must always act as a steadying influence in ages when the tide of a false independence sets in against the barriers which seem to check its progress. For good or for evil the manners of children towards their parents, in England at all events, have been considerably altered. Whether it be in the withdrawing of outward titles of courtesy or signs of respect, or whether it be in ill-concealed contempt for their

[1] Ephes. vi. 1.

authority and advice, the supremacy assumed by parents in matters affecting the conduct of their children has given way to a persuasive pleading on a basis of equality. Instead of honouring father or mother as a duty, for what they are, and what they have done and suffered in the past, there is a tendency to demand that the parents should do something to earn this respect, and show themselves worthy of the honour to which they lay claim. But the commandment does not order us merely to honour our father and mother when they seem to deserve it, but to honour them always as such; and never is the duty thus inculcated more beautifully exhibited than in the case of a child showing respect to an unworthy parent.[1]

An examination of this divine precept will show us that it embodies certain principles which are the very pillars of the world, and the bulwarks of society.

Parents first of all represent authority, and without authority the world could not go on for one moment. We are placed in a kingdom of law sustained by that higher intelligence, power, and love which represent divine government. When the old Greeks looked out on this world with all its wonderful obedience to authority, where law worked itself out in its hundred minute adjustments, where the Heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament showed His handiwork, they called the system which they observed by a name signifying order. Cosmos represented to them the prevailing impression stamped upon the cunning workmanship of the universe and its well-ordered force. The homage paid to law is prominent again in all the ungrudging honour paid to kings who represent to the nation the fountain-head of its laws. 'God save the king!' would rise with its glad acclaim equally for a weak and profligate prince as for a wise and benevolent monarch in so far as both were the representatives of

[1] See Dale, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 118 and foll.

the personified majesty of law and order. For law is divine, and therefore to be honoured in the person of the king, in the person of the magistrate, and in the person of the parent who, as father or mother, wields God's delegated powers in the family. A rebellious, disobedient and wilful child contrives to do a great deal more mischief than is represented by the unhappiness of his home, and his father's and mother's shame. He strikes a blow also against authority, that respect for law and order, rank and merit, which, traced far enough back, reaches up to God Almighty Himself. Irreverence is the same spirit in essence wherever it manifests itself, whether it is seen in the sweeping away of barriers and the iconoclasm of revolutions, where liberty is confused with licence, equality with a uniform mediocrity, and fraternity with a dull level of selfishness; or whether it be seen in the fury of anti-religious upheavals, or as here in the revolt against the restraints and decencies of home life. It may be said to reach even farther than this, and to display itself within, in the revolt which the passions sometimes stir up against the will, depriving it of its sovereign power, and cutting off the succours which reason and the higher spirit were ready to minister. The English people are by nature a reverent race. It has been said of us by a critic of our ways on the other side of the Atlantic, 'The Englishman is a reverent man; it seems to be natural to him. And the lessons of reverence once engrained in the national character appear everywhere. The well-educated and refined Englishman carries with him a higher regard for authority, a more tender respect and esteem for the parental relation, and he is more impressed with what is grand and inspiring in nature than one who has been educated in a different school.' If this testimony be true, we owe a great deal of this spirit of veneration to our homes, which are in so many cases the guardians of

reverence, and where our children learn the priceless value of obedience to authority.

But a second principle will be found to underlie this precept, and that is, roughly speaking, the value of experience.

Just as parents are the embodiment to their children of authority, so they are also of experience. God has put into their hands a book which contains the record of many a dark hour, some of whose pages are written in blood, and illuminated with light which has been vouchsafed to them before the opening responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood, in order that they might impart to those that came after them the wise principles which may govern life, what to do, what to avoid, how to suffer, how to bear prosperity, and how to make the world better than they found it.

And this teaching by means of experience seems to be a method of divine instruction, that is, a method used by God Almighty Himself. It figures largely, for instance, in Psalm lxxviii., where one generation is constituted the instructor of the next in the history and methods of God's dealing with His people. Sometimes this experience would seem to be gathered up in a word or a title where God is pleased to reveal Himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, associating Himself with all the experience which gathers round those names.

So it is possible for children now to learn the graduated lessons of life at the mouth of experience, from those who can tell them the truth about good and evil, about sin and temptation, and not leave them bare of those early restraints, which are as the leaves which protect the rising growth of the tree, and provide lungs for its forming fruit. Nor is the teaching of experience all prohibitory or monitory: there is the bright memory of God's laws as well; there is the road to the green pastures and the waters of com-

fort to which it is the parent's privilege to show the way. For a parent, who can only offer as the results of experience a theory of life to which his practice gives the lie, will only reap the unfruitfulness which is the inevitable result of that instruction which can only proclaim : 'Do as I say, not as I do.'

But a third and more obvious principle still underlies this precept, and that is the grandest of all principles —love. God puts into the hands of parents those 'cords of a man,' those 'bands of love,' which often serve to draw back the wanderer from the paths of sin. When the child is told to honour his father and mother, he knows that, in many cases at all events, he is called upon to do this not merely because it is his duty, but also because honour and respect are something of the nature of a debt due in return for love and self-denial so lavishly showered upon him.

There cannot be any pledge more important than this, in those relations with the world which is outside self, which binds the child from his earliest years to respect authority, to listen to experience, and respond to love. Entrenched within the principles safeguarded by this commandment he may await with confidence the heavy responsibilities which devolve upon him in all that is meant by the word 'neighbour.'

II

Another commandment is now imposed which deals with the respect which must be shown for life as such. 'Thou shalt not kill' is a very wide precept of far-reaching significance.

The child must learn to respect life when he sees it, and although, as he grows up, he will find that the laws of civilised communities enforce this respect in its outward manifestations, yet at the same time there will be a large field of motive, expression, and unprotected

activity in which he will find the strength and support of being able to fall back upon an absolute injunction of Almighty God imposed upon him under the obligation of a strong pledge. It is well to note at the outset that when our Blessed Lord wished to describe Satan to the Jews who had become his children, He spoke of him in a very significant phrase as 'a murderer from the beginning';[1] as if this were the expression which best summarised his achievements, and characterised the issue of the sinful principles gathered up in his nature. It has been pointed out[2] that the devil is a deliberate agent who works for death in a world whose Sovereign Creator works for life. The mission of Satan is to kill, not only as the author of sin which ends in the disintegration of destruction, but also as one who barbs every bait of his powerful seductions with concealed death. It is the long record of a malignant career; for whether positively in goading men into sin, or negatively in turning them away from grace, Satan deliberately sets himself to kill. Wherever we see murder, death, or blighted hopes, if we trace the causes back sufficiently far, we shall find the murderer, before whom the land is as the garden of Eden, behind whom it is a desolate wilderness.

In pledging himself therefore not to kill, the child of God is standing aside from the hosts of Satan, and ranging himself on the side of God, Whose glorious work it is to create, save, and build up. Here is one of the commandments which our Blessed Lord Himself explained, so that we have the mind of Him Who first imposed it, showing the wide scope of its injunctions. And He shows us that anger finding vent in contemptuous terms and expressions is as hateful in the sight of God as any offence punished in the local law-

[1] S. John viii. 44.
[2] See Hutchings, *The Mystery of the Temptation*, p. 146.

courts, or by the Sanhedrin with capital punishment, and is liable to similar degrees of punishment in the tribunal of God.[1] For anger of this description is but murder in essence, only needing to be mixed with circumstance to be fully developed; and the Christian man who has pledged himself to the terms of this commandment finds that he is constrained to resist the temptation to kill, even in the remotest frontier of his being, and that he must recognise as the spirit of murder a causeless, malignant, uncontrollable anger springing from wrong and distorted motives.

He who has thus pledged himself will find, as life goes on, that the commandment is by no means the easy thing which at first sight it seems to be. 'Thou shalt not kill' would seem certainly to embrace within its purview 'Thou shalt not kill thyself.' Suicide is a painful but an interesting subject which has a history attached to it. There is no doubt as to the mind of the Church on the subject, and the law of England upholds the law of the Church in regarding suicide as a felony, because it is equivalent to self-murder. And if the old barbarous and useless indignities offered to the poor dead body have been abandoned, it is from a sense of their incongruity and repulsiveness, not because there has been any change in the attitude adopted towards this sin.[2] It is a subject of painful interest at a time when the selfishness of a high civilisation is working out in so many cases a weariness of and a distaste for life itself in those who are sickened with satiety; and when an age which seems marching through gambling to ruin does not hesitate to pay its creditors with the last remaining capital—its life, and play suicide as a final stake.

[1] S. Matt. v. 22.

[2] Some have imagined that the burial of suicides at the cross-roads was not meant as an indignity, but rather to place the body, debarred from resting in the churchyard, under the shelter of the cross, which generally stood at the meeting of the ways.

In the old world, in its better times, suicide was discouraged, and looked upon for the most part as contemptible. 'No man,' says Cicero, 'must leave his post without the order of his commanding officer, that is God.'[1] 'To die in avoiding poverty or love, or anything grievous, is the act, not of a brave man, but rather of a coward,'[2] says another who bears a great name. On the other hand, the great Latin epic poet places the suicides in his hell among the unfortunates rather than among the guilty.[3] But it was left for the Stoics, when the Roman Empire was tottering to its fall, to dignify self-destruction with almost a religious lustre. They euphemistically styled it *ἐξαγωγή*, an ushering oneself out of the world. 'There is nothing more contemptible than to wish for death,' says Seneca. 'Why wish for that which is in your own power? Die at once if you wish to do so.'[4] Here the murderer had so prevailed on men's feelings, and so warped their mental estimate of the matter, as to induce them to court self-murder as a virtue. 'The doctrine of suicide was the culminating point of Roman Stoicism.' And while emperors were offering a reward for a new pleasure, men were found who sought that pleasure in death, or at least an escape from a life made intolerable by those things which were called its pleasures.[5]

Neither must he who so interprets the meaning of

[1] Vetatque Pythagoras injussu imperatoris, id est Dei, de præsidio et statione vitæ discedere.—*Cato Major*, chap. xx.

[2] *τὸ δ' ἀποθνήσκειν φεύγοντα πενίαν ἢ ἔρωτα ἤ τι λυπηρὸν οὐκ ἀνδρείου, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον δειλοῦ.*—Aristotle, *Nich. Eth.* iii. 7, 13. See also ix. 4-8.

[3] Virgil, *Æn.* vi. 434.

[4] Seneca, *Epist.* 117. See Grant's *Aristotle*, vol. i. p. 291.

[5] For a valuable *résumé* of the history of suicide, see Liddon, *Some Elements of Religion*, Lecture iii. p. 121, and foll. (first edition). See the quotation there from Lecky, *History of European Morals*, ii. 52. See also a paper read before the Statistical Society of London by Dr. Ogle. For Dante's estimate of the suicide as compared with Virgil's, see *Inferno*, canto xi. 41, and also canto xiii.

his pledge merely suppose himself to be committed to an attitude as to self-murder. He who has followed up our Blessed Lord's exposition of this commandment will easily see that if there is a murder of intention and a murder of word, so there may be a suicide which comes under the condemnation of no earthly tribunal, and of which no court of inquest takes cognisance. Many a man has ruined himself, both body and soul, by a simple want of self-restraint. To impair the body or the mind by sin, to stifle the spirit, to follow greedily after those things whose end is death, is to commit spiritual suicide. The prohibition is a stern and also a wide one: 'Thou shalt not kill thy body, thou shalt not kill thy life, thou shalt not kill thy soul,' for life comes from God, and must be rendered back again as a precious charge to Him Who gave it.

But in its more obvious sense the prohibition 'Thou shalt not kill' enjoins on the Christian that he shall not, out of causeless anger or malignity, kill his neighbour. The plain and literal offence which is forbidden by this commandment is safeguarded by the law of the land. That which is a sin against God is also a crime against the State, and murder is punishable by death.

It would be a shallow and perverted judgment, however, which would nail up these words as a motto over our regimental barracks, or inscribe them over the judgment-seat in our courts of assize, or brand them upon the brow of one who has slain another in defence of life or trust. God who punishes with death in the pestilence, the influence of seasons, earthquake or fire, still uses men as His agents in the awful 'assize of nations' known as war, or in the unsheathing of the sword of justice in the hands of those who are armed with power to wield it.

But while we hand over the integrity of this com-

mandment in its obvious meaning to the custody of the State, it must be with no slight self-abasement as a nation, that crimes of violence and brutality show so little signs of diminution among Christians, and that civilisation has been able to do little more than check murder.

In binding himself, however, to keep this commandment the Christian will remember that here, too, it is perfectly easy to kill out that which makes up the fulness of life to our neighbour without finding himself amenable to any penalty of the law.

Such things as spite, malignity, and envious backbiting are really of the essence of murder, for they take away from a man that which goes to make up his life and happiness. There is many a man who is stabbed to death by a malignant paragraph in a society journal, inserted to make a heading, propagated to ensure a sale, but unverified, unauthenticated, and untrue. The contradiction passes unnoticed, the scandal lives, and the tender reputation crawls away mortally wounded to die of malignant gossip.

So it is with passion, ill-temper, selfishness, and all those imperfections, as they are thought to be, which lay such a burden on those who have to put up with them: they all strike a blow against the fulness and completeness of life. Here the husband is chilled in his professional life by the exacting unsympathetic wife, or the wife is crushed down by the harshness and neglect of the husband, or the children are soured in the fresh spring of their youth and spirits, and life is impaired in its fulness and deprived of its legitimate expansion.

The commandment once more touches with its prohibition the withholding of goods from the poor, overcrowding and overworking, or overburdening those who are set under us. These are common sins which the child of God is pledged to avoid.

But the murder of a neighbour's soul is an offence which is even more common, and far more deadly. One of the most awful curses in God's Holy Word is directed against this sin: 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!'[1] And yet this murder goes on with brutal persistency. Here it is a full-grown man maddened with sin, and restless in his guilt, who snaps out from his poisoned jaws the hideous mysteries of iniquity, which poison the life of the young boy who has just stepped out from the protection of home into the wild rush of town life. Here it is the drunkard giving his child a sip out of his glass, or letting him come or wait for him amidst scenes of debauchery and sin. The selfish brutality which injures another's soul without pain or remorse, whatever form it takes, is a terrible form of murder, and can only expect the curse which awaits those who injure souls for whom Christ died.

Perhaps it would not be wrong to extend even further the purview of this commandment, and to interpret the precept 'Thou shalt not kill' into a general prohibition which forbids killing anything needlessly. The Christian must ever feel that it is incumbent on him to be a power of life in all his dealings with the world. He never can regard the beautiful world around him without a sense of his responsibilities towards it. The cornfields are preaching, the lilies are comforting us, the birds are teaching us how to depend upon God. The whole creation in its strange suffering, and mute upturned longing, is linked with our hopes and fears. It is only a stupid

[1] S. Matt. xviii. 6, 7.

and coarse brutality which scatters broadcast death and suffering, and emphasises the mark of the brand of failure. Cruelty, waste, wanton destruction stand self-condemned in the world of God's creating. It is a solemn thing to take life, even the life of a poor creature that crawls at our feet, for life comes before us warm with the impress of the hand of God. We can imitate in painting or in moulding the bird or the flower which we destroy, but we cannot give it life. Life is a great mystery, as it thrusts itself upwards, even in the grass at our feet; and waste of life where necessity or utility, or the higher needs of the world, are not concerned, cannot but come under the deeper prohibition of the commandment which forbids its destruction.

No one can be cruel or wasteful, or deal out needless death, who has learned to say, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth.'

'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof'; hence the commandment: 'Thou shalt not kill.'

III

The Christian is pledged to yet another commandment which, as explained by our Blessed Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, carries him right away to the region of thoughts, looks, and motives.

It is surely one of the most fundamental of all the commandments because, like its predecessor, it has to do with the sacred gift of life, and with the due regulation of the great power of love, whose waywardness underlies almost every tragedy, and whose power seems to defy every barrier. Murder and adultery are evil shapes which look in upon the child out of the untrodden paths of life, when as yet, perhaps, he has been brought face to face only with the tenderness of fostering care and the sanctities of a loving home.

We find it difficult to realise the completeness of Satan's victory over humanity. The innocence of our first parents, who knew no shame, is the measure of the degradation which has left a taint of shame on parentage. The problem-play and the sex-novel of the nineteenth century, the obscene literature and the degrading depravity of Christian cities are flagrant examples of the *corruptio optimi* which is *pessima*, whereby those functions of human nature wherein man, as such, makes his nearest approach to the Creator, are degraded to the perversion of his supremacy as the head of creation.

Obscenity and irreverent coarseness must never be allowed to blind our eyes to the extreme dignity of the human body. It is God that made us. 'I will give thanks unto Thee,' says the Psalmist, 'for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'[1] And the fact that marriage is a sacrament, and the only sacrament instituted by God before sin appeared,[2] whereas other sacraments have their origin after sin and by reason of sin, must lead us to regard even those passions which are most perplexing and most dangerous as sacred to Him Who 'maketh His messengers of winds, and His ministers in the flames of fire.'[3]

The degradation of sacred powers and the perversion of life in its authorised channels of transmission are possibilities, however, which are bravely put before the Christian child that he may resolutely resist their insidious approach in the long struggle which lies before him. Strange accusations are sometimes brought against the Holy Bible, even against the Prayer Book, of an unwise or even indelicate plainness of speech in condemning evil, or enforcing the claims of moral rectitude. It is strange that society, which has long cast all reserve to the winds, in the dramatic situations of the stage, or the discussions and developments of

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 13. [2] S. Thom. Aq., *Suppl.* xlii. 2. [3] Ps. civ. 4.

life's mysteries in fiction, should shrink with indignation from the plain speaking of the exhortation in the marriage service. It is conceivable that in a state of idyllic innocency, when the knowledge of evil was kept back at every barrier, it might be well to abstain from even the suggestion of possible sin, its meaning and its degradation. But as things are, and have been in every age of civilisation, in varying degrees of less or more, it is ostrich-like to suppose an utter ignorance of sin; it is impolitic to refuse to treat sin as from the side of God, with all the sternness which belongs to the violation of divine command, and with all the solemnity of divine prohibition, when the same subjects are being treated with all the levity of dramatic handling, or at the most represented as forbidden luxuries, branded for the time being with a social *ἀτιμία*.

As it is, the outspoken words of the Bible, and the plain prohibition of the Prayer Book, are often the only guidance which some souls receive as they pass beside abysses of which there is no fathoming, and snares so cleverly concealed that they begin with death. The prohibition which the Christian pledges himself most solemnly to observe, in its plain literal meaning, enforces his neighbour's rights in the most sacred region of possession which is safeguarded by the marriage tie. The husband must be the husband of and faithful to one wife; the wife must be the wife of and faithful to one husband. The sacredness of the approach to marriage must also be regarded, and the motives or impulses which might tend to its perversion must be regulated.

But, in the first place, the Christian, by his Baptismal promise, pledges himself to regard with a never-failing respect the sacred law of marriage. Marriage is held by the Church to be an indissoluble union of one man and one woman into a

complete and undivided humanity. It is duality in of unity. There is no union like it save the union God and man in one Christ, and the mystical union which is betwixt Christ and His Church.[1] It is this union which a lax morality is ever seeking to loose, while it turns marriage into a mere companionship, lightly enterprised, lightly dissolved. Whereas marriage is no mere contract between individuals, but a state entered into by contract which a man can no more dissolve, unless death severs the partnership, than he can dissolve fatherhood or sonship, or any other natural state in which he finds himself placed. Marriage is the natural expansion of manhood or womanhood sanctioned by God in accordance with natural design as the foundation of the family. And therefore that a man should have more wives than one, or that there should be any unfaithfulness in the marriage state, is a blot upon nature and a blow to the great scheme of God; so that the faithlessness of either party in the married state as a pretext for divorce is altogether beside the question. The Church, when superintending the contract whereby this state is enterprised, expressly provides for every contingency, when besides riches and poverty, sickness and health, she recognises what she calls 'better' or 'worse,' that is, conditions under which there might be a temptation to endeavour to break the indissoluble bond. If it be said that our Blessed Lord recognised a possible dissolution in certain circumstances which He describes, it must be remembered that, first of all, it is extremely doubtful whether His actual words have been transmitted to us on this point in the chapter of S. Matthew's gospel which most seems to suggest this possibility. Further, that it has been held by some that the liberty apparently permitted refers to putting away, and not to marrying another, which after all would

[1] See also *John Walter Lea, A Memoir*, p. 371, etc.

not be a pressing question to a Jew in our Lord's time, when polygamy was not only permitted but encouraged by the Rabbis.[1] Further, that no less authority than Dr. Döllinger, endorsed by Dr. Liddon,[2] looked upon our Lord as referring in this passage to the Jewish treatment of pre-nuptial, not post-nuptial, sin. The fact that this interpretation is largely disowned does not alter the weight that is to be attached to the opinion of both these authorities. And after all that can be said, our Blessed Lord distinctly affirmed that the divorce permitted by Moses, which was in a case very similar to that which is now called the case of the innocent party, was contrary to primitive purity, and only a concession to the hardness of the human heart, so that at the very best the so-called re-marriage of the innocent party, if submitted to our Blessed Lord, would be branded with this stigma, that it was contrary to primitive purity, and argued a heart hardened to the sense of divine truth.

And those who are best able to speak from experience corroborate the *a priori* fears of those who argue from the standpoint of theological truth, and associate any laxity in granting permission for divorce with a general corruption of public morals.[3] Marriage was one of the first injunctions of the Holy Spirit in bringing order out of chaos and tranquillity out of confusion. But within the sacred enclosure of the Church it becomes a great deal more than a bare sign of a great union, it becomes 'an effectual sign.' The mutual consent and plighting of troth before the priest receives from him the blessing which tends to make it to be that which it signifies, a union like that

[1] See Bishop Lightfoot's *Notes on the Epistles of S. Paul*, 1 Cor. vii. 2, and the references there given, p. 221.

[2] See Liddon, 'Christ and Human Law,' *University Sermons*, second series.

[3] See the subject treated fully in Knox Little, *Holy Matrimony*, in this series.

between Christ and His Church in something more than a sign, and one of the many important ways in which the Holy Spirit works for the good of the individual, and the furthering of the cause of God. It is sad that marriage should ever be regarded unworthily; it is sad also that it should be regarded with frivolity. No one is allowed to approach this rite in the Church without very solemn warning, and the warning is only the prelude to the fulness of the gift, in which is cemented a union like that betwixt Christ and His Church; of which we are told by the apostle that Christ 'gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.'[1] Here is the true character of the union, a union brought about by self-surrender, in which the husband gives himself, and the wife submits herself to her own husband in everything: and a union further enterprised with this object, that each many sanctify the other.

It is well that these two notes of holy marriage should be kept prominently forward: a union founded on sacrifice, and a union tending to sanctify. It is a grand thing, in days when the elaboration of civilisation makes selfishness in minute things more and more possible, that there should be some one to love more than self, some one on whom to bestow the fulness of self-devotion. The self-denial of a single life undertaken for God, that self may be placed more and more at His service, is a noble thing; but there is a great and true self-denial possible in the married state as well which renders it capable of a sacrifice which may be even comparable with the great sacrifice referred to above.

It may be, for instance, that a young man who has no ties upon him, who has no call on his daily sympathies and tenderness, who has no one's comfort to consider but his own, who can move about as he pleases, and

[1] Ephes. v. 25, 26.

spend his money on self, and choose those friends and companions which suit the whim of the hour, knows little of the bracing and stimulating effect of living for another, of living with another, perhaps of different mould and character, where mutual concession in him who sacrifices, in her who submits her will, constitutes a third life which is the outcome of both. And then following on this there is the joy of fatherhood and motherhood demanding unselfish surrender in the interests of the children. These things in themselves strike a blow at mere selfishness, while in all the sufferings, trials, and separations incident to the married state, the supernatural grace of God now tends to assert itself until man and wife, in the power of the mystic union, become like Christ ready to give, like the Church ready to submit.

And if mutual sanctification be an object, sin makes men and women more and more unfit for this holy bond. Browning has told us of the painter drawn down from the heights of his God-given art by the lack of sympathy in her who took his gold and withheld her inspiration. The marriage of Samson with Delilah is the history of many a marriage unhallowed by God. And who shall probe the depths of cruelty which leaves a young life, snatched away from home, to pine and die, the children to starve, and despair to take up its abode, while in one set of circumstances he is gambling at the club, in another he is drinking away his wages at the public-house.

But the pledge involved in obedience to this commandment goes further than this. All the approaches to marriage have to be sanctified, and all that would tend to its perversion must be removed. The Christian ideal sets before itself the absolute purity of the individual, whether he be married in all the responsibility of that wondrous union, or whether from set

purpose, either of devotion or circumstance, he remains unmarried. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord removes, as it were, this warning from being the exclusive safeguard of marriage, and puts it over the whole life of man as the protection of its purity. He aims at purifying those units which make up society, and attacking sin in the strongholds of the heart before it issues forth in the tragedies of wanton passion. Painters and poets, and writers of fiction, have vied with each other in depicting these awful tragedies, but still men and women for whom Christ died are driven in troops towards sin's slaughter-house which is the grave of happiness, and among them are those who have been sheltered in the protection of Christian homes, and trained, taught, and nourished by the Church, their mother.

And therefore, as we have seen, the child, as yet unassaulted, promises; buffeted with his first temptations, he promises yet again to renounce the flesh; while Nature herself bars the way, and God threatens, and conscience pleads, and even a weak public opinion feebly protests in the interest of a self-control which can defy temptation, and of the noble pride of a self-reverence which shrinks from defiling God's image and defacing His likeness.

IV

The Christian is pledged, by the terms of his Baptismal vow, to faithfully keep another of God's commandments, which intimately concerns his place and integrity in this world of God's creating. 'Thou shalt not steal,' if it be no longer upheld in this land by the awful and excessive punishment of death, is still sanctioned with heavy criminal penalties, and comes before man not as a mere State enactment, but as part of the moral law of God, dealing with an offence which ranks

in God's sight with murder and adultery, and presumably has so many ramifications in the hearts of professing Christians as to make the prohibition of it not unsuitable at the most solemn service of the Church, and the avoidance of it a subject of a twice-repeated pledge in the course of a man's life.

If the two commandments considered above have to do with respect for life and respect for the marriage laws, which regulate the transmission of life, this commandment has to do with the outward accessories of life; it is based on respect for property, and this property, something which we can call our own, something which to all intents and purposes is our own, is what we all cling to. There are few delights so keen as that first delight of the child in possessing something which he can call his very own. It is a joy of opening life to feel the thrill of power which comes with the sense of having earned something for oneself. And in later life, there is a peculiar delight in proprietorship, the possession of house, land, or capital. And even the rich man does not always care so much for that which money brings as for the sense of ownership which comes with it. This sentiment may be traced again even in the national aspirations of a people which is sensitive as to any diminution of its territory or control, and proud if it can boast of an empire which is ever expanding in extent and influence.

It may be disputed as to whether this is not an unworthy sentiment of human complacency. It has been said that Property is the thief which ties up in a few hands treasure and even sustenance which was meant for all, which prowls through life snatching on all sides, and holding its own by brute strength, pursued by a hungry pack of yelping sins which are a danger to the community and a disgrace to civilisation, albeit the natural product of Property.

Perhaps it would not be too much to say that by

reason of this very commandment Property can claim God on its side. It can open the book of Revelation and say, 'The God Who forbad theft, sanctioned thereby the rights of property.'

But Property can go further and appeal to an instinct of humanity, a sentiment that is innate in man, that a man has a right to his own work, to use it and to dispose of it, and that to deprive a man of the rights of his own production is nothing else but slavery. And Christianity has recognised this fact and legislated upon it. That which a man calls his own is and will be unequally distributed; still the rights of property must be respected; but upon these rights Christianity has imposed other duties and responsibilities. Abundance after satisfying every legitimate need, must never degenerate into luxury. The surplus funds stored with those who have most of this world's goods must be used for the benefit of those who have less, in well-ordered schemes of Christian benevolence; while Christ Himself, and His followers in all ages, have for ever removed the stigma from poverty, inasmuch as in both precept and example He has proclaimed to us, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.'[1]

Property, if part of the divine economy, is liable to serious corruption, and among the many evils which surround its possession there are the constant attempts to add to property unjustly by violent or dishonest means. And it is this sinful principle which is met by the commandment which enacts under divine sanction, 'Thou shalt not steal.'

This precept penetrates into regions as deep as any of those which it was necessary to enter in considering the last two commandments. A man must not take it for granted that he is free as regards any possible infraction of this divine law, if he regards dishonesty

[1] S. Luke xii. 15.

as a crime unworthy of an honourable man, and only possible to inferior natures. This command would seem to say, for instance, in its widest possible application, 'Thou shalt not steal from God.' If it be conceded that God allows us to hold property, it should be explained, for the sake of greater accuracy, that we only hold this property as tenants at His will, and therefore that we owe to God our tenant dues, and especially His tithe.

Man is very powerful, but he does not own the world after all. He may push his boundary farther and farther out, and capture for the well-defined regions of explained law those things which his forefathers assigned to the unexplained, or, as it was to them, the miraculous. God may open up for us more and more the riches and resources of the world; still if we rob Him, if we contemptuously say, 'We will not have this Man to rule over us,' sooner or later we hear, 'Thou shalt not steal.'

God has lifted the veil which conceals His working, and has shown to His prophets the great empires mounting up before them and passing away, one after another, as if they had never been. Nations like men are immortal until their work is done, but they cannot resist God. 'Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God' —this constant warning of Holy Scripture is but the expression on a large scale of the prohibition, 'Thou shalt not steal.' And in this wider sense the possibility of dishonesty in the highest things is a danger ever present to every one who makes his pledge to observe God's holy laws. If it be true that God gives us the brain to think, the hand to work, the soul to live; and if, knowing this, a man allows himself to forget it and to say, 'By my own power, my own strength, and the mightiness of my hand, I have done it,' he is robbing God; and every prayerless day, every week without its Sunday, every action done in proud

self-satisfaction, is a spiritual theft, inasmuch as it is a withholding from God His dues.

If the rights of God are to be respected under pain of incurring the guilt of dishonesty, so also a Christian is bound to respect the claims of religion and the Church. 'Thou shalt not rob the Church' may be an unpopular reading of this injunction, but is nevertheless a true one. Men are beginning slowly and with tardy justice to realise the monstrous iniquity which characterised the sweeping away of the religious foundations in England in the sixteenth century. A modern writer, who speaks temperately on the subject, has said that it is impossible to read any account of the work done by the monastic institutions for the poor, without perceiving in how many directions the present generation has been compelled by very necessity to devise some substitute for the consideration exercised by them. It is impossible to read without shame the record of the destruction, under the name of religion, of the two great hospitals of St. Mary and St. Bartholomew in London;[1] and these revenues thus set free did little good to the nation at large, and, if tradition can be credited, have proved a *damnosa hæreditas* to those presently benefited by them. At times when the Church is unpopular and the State needy, there arises the temptation to alienate endowments set apart for God; and, while the income of the nation is said to be a thousand millions a year, to sacrifice the little ewe-lamb of the Church to satisfy the wayfaring man who casts greedy eyes on that which belongs neither to him who asks for it, nor to the nation that offers it. Money given to God, whether it be in the hands of the Church or of some other society, may never be secularised without fear of impiety.

And in this connection it may be only too possible to find that scanty almsgiving, a neglect to give God

[1] See Hake, *Suffering London*, p. xxxv.

His tithe, an eager appropriation of that which was given to a man to distribute, may also be a violation of this precept, 'Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings.'[1]

But the Christian pledges himself, in the plain and obvious meaning of this precept, not to rob his neighbour. There is a popular yet unworthy proverb which speaks of 'honesty as being the best policy.' Although this is true, yet, as Whately pointed out, he who is honest because it is the best policy is little better than a rogue. A man should be honest because it is right and noble so to be, and because it is God's law; and yet few people who have thoroughly examined the subject will be disposed to admit either that dishonesty is uncommon, or that it is a sin from which those who might presumably be supposed to know better, hold themselves aloof. At one time we are sickened with the exposure of commercial dishonesty which puts gain before patriotism, and sends out soldiers to certain death, because to secure a little profit the contractor has supplied them with unfit food or unserviceable weapons, for which he has charged the full price. There is the dishonesty of the man who runs into debt, and buys things for which he cannot pay, and for which he makes no effort to pay. This is in effect only a form of stealing. One man goes into a shop, and steals an article for which he is punished by a term of imprisonment; another goes into the same shop and procures a similar article by buying it and not paying for it.

There is the dishonesty of betting and its almost certain concomitants, where a man takes money given him by God for His own purposes, and trifles it away or risks it in an unworthy manner, without realising the responsibility of ownership or the value of money as a gift from God. Here a dereliction of principle is

[1] Mal. iii. 8.

followed almost certainly by alienating sums of money which might be spent on good purposes, and in doing that which ministers to the corruption of others, and not unfrequently leads to downright dishonesty in order to satisfy what is ironically called a debt of honour.

God has implanted in the human soul a sense of truth and justice, a delicacy of soul learned in His presence, and this sense of honour the Christian is bound jealously to maintain; a little sharp practice in a game on which nothing depends, a little dishonesty at the custom-house, a little carelessness about things borrowed, a mild fraud on the railway company, these and other common tricks of everyday life may be charged with consequences altogether incommensurate with the slightness of the deviation from strict duty and honour. They may be the little bits of moral grit which blunt the keen edge of rectitude and the sense of duty.

Money, position, and the things of the world are some of the material out of which character is being formed. They are the testing-places for posts of trust in God's kingdom hereafter. One of the few Apocryphal sayings attributed to our Blessed Lord bears on this: 'Be ye,' He said to His disciples, 'good bankers, tried money-changers.'[1] Take the things of the world which the sinner uses wrongly, and out of them develop virtue here and happiness hereafter. A dishonesty in trifles penetrates through to the deepest principles of Christian life, and damages that true estimate of perfection which it is the honour of Christianity to have produced.

V

There is another commandment, in which 'our neighbour' now figures by name, which the Christian pledges himself to observe.

[1] See Westcott, *Introduction to the Gospels*, App. C., γίνεσθε τραπεζῖται δόκιμοι.

Here, again, as in the other commandments, the sin is taken in its most extreme manifestation, where human law would step in with prohibition and penalty. The law of perjury and libel in civilised countries is sanctioned by no less stringent penalties than the law of theft. And the moral stigma attached to its violation is almost equally severe.

False witness in its basest form has a sinister history. It figures in the history of the Passion as that which made it possible to put our Lord to death; and in the cruel tragedy also of the first martyrdom, it was a false witness which drove S. Stephen to his end: 'This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the Law.'[1] And the record of the law-courts or the annals of a general Parliamentary election show how terribly common such crimes still are, and how little restraint is exercised by higher considerations over the wayward jealousies and passions of men.

If the eighth commandment is based upon a respect for property, this commandment has to do with the use and abuse of God's great gift to men in language. Its power is amply recognised; more and more the written word of an irresponsible Press sways the fortunes of states as well as men. The obligations imposed by the gift, its responsibilities and dangers, are not so commonly recognised. And yet, if it be considered that a word spoken can never be recalled, that it goes forth like an arrow from a bow into an unknown space, its importance is manifest. There can be no more awful thought, for instance, for him who has published some book, which he would fain recall—a book which saps the foundations of morality, or whose epigrammatic sarcasm has flashed across the delicate beauties of religious life with scorching flame —that what he has written or said has gone out of his reach, accumulating an account only to be reckoned

[1] Acts vi. 13.

up at the Last Day as a terrible addition to the tale of personal sins, already swollen to the dimensions of an unpayable debt.

Just a little word is heedlessly dropped by a passionate king, and the pavement of Canterbury Cathedral is stained with the blood of a great archbishop. It is only an unconsidered title of fulsome adulation, but by it the ambition is fired which treachery and murder can scarcely appease. It is but the little streak of snow which drops and falls away, but presently a village is in ruins overwhelmed by an avalanche.

An old Spanish fable tells that the Tongue and the Sword were locked up in prison together for brawling, and that the Tongue asked the Sword what crime had been brought against him that he found himself in such a sorry plight. The Sword answered that he had made some ugly cuts, that he had been drawn in an unjust war, and had taken away life. 'Is that all?' said the Tongue. 'I every day speak blasphemies, I swear, I lie, I grumble, I speak scandals, I break off, I destroy friendships, I extinguish peace, I flatter, I sow distrust, I wear a man down by unjust accusations.' 'Stay,' said the Sword, 'my crimes are as nothing compared with yours, they are but as a spark to your fire.'

Two principles would seem to stand out conspicuously from this commandment: the one is the utterly sacred nature of truth, and the other our solemn responsibility to our neighbour.

Most men, in their better moments, have an innate appreciation of the beauty and value of truth. The fall of a dishonest man who has been trading on the confidence of his neighbour is welcomed almost with a sense of relief, as if some vital part of the world's machinery had been freed from a disabling complication. One of the most genuine manifestations of this feeling is seen in the unconscious homage paid to a

fine impersonation of the cheat on the stage, where the audience, instead of applauding the successful acting, are carried out of themselves by the truthfulness of the delineation, and instead of acclaiming the actor, hiss the villain.

The same feeling of relief manifests itself in the gradual discrediting of fanaticisms, when results avowedly based on false principles dwindle away and die, as the little measure of truth which kept them alive is exhausted, and the rock-bound roots fade hopelessly in the heat of the merciless sun.

Truth has its triumph, and when it is recognised is sure of its applause. Here it is the revival of dry and barren branches, as the living sap has still power to course through their veins. Here it is the tardy vindication of some scientific, political, or social principle which wins its way through obloquy and opposition, where Galileo is tortured but his science triumphs, where the martyrs are put to death but their cause is victorious, where reforms which were denounced are recognised as sound and salutary, and schemes of improvement once voted dangerous are honoured as the simplest expression of true philanthropy. If there be such a thing as a national virtue Englishmen are disposed to be proud of their traditional bluntness and absence of affectation, because, they say, it witnesses to a national straightforwardness, a national love of truth, which would condemn any form of hypocrisy, disdain unreality, and banish shams.

More than all this, Truth must be a sacred thing, for it is an attribute of God that cannot lie: 'I am the truth'; and a criticism of the Holy Scriptures which affects to say that the distinction between genuine and spurious, true and imaginary, history and legend has no bearing on the value of the books, cannot expect to carry with it the common instinct of human nature.

As to the importance of recognising our responsi-

bility to our neighbour, this is a responsibility which rests upon us equally as inhabitants of the world, as members of the church, as component parts of a great nation, as citizens of a city, as members of any community, and children of a family. 'Wherefore,' says Holy Scripture, 'putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.'[1]

It is a great truth, which must be faced, that God has fitted our lives into each other by a marvellous adjustment. It meets us at the beginning, in the provision made for the fuller development of Adam, and it meets us again in the divinely ordained church, calculated to impress upon man the necessary fact that he is not left to himself to struggle as he best may to Heaven, but that he is part and parcel of a community which has duties towards him and towards which he has duties in return. The creed which he professes brings this home to him and leads him on still further to recognise the communion of saints.

And just as God seems to have put different products of the earth in different places that He might draw the world together, as nation trades with nation for the necessities of life, so we are made to depend on each other for our bodily, mental, and spiritual supplies. One man's plenty is to minister to the deficiency of another. The parable of the Good Samaritan has so widened the connotation of the word 'neighbour' that it is made to include all the world. To be 'unneighbourly' is much more than a social offence, it is to be untrue to the great principle of this commandment, the second pillar of its integrity, a principle of which he was ignorant who asked the Saviour of the world, 'And who is my neighbour?'

If it be true that these are the two great principles which underlie this commandment, the abiding sanctity

[1] Ephes. iv. 25.

of truth and the sacredness of the unity which binds together the human race, it must also be allowed that there is a deep-seated tendency in human nature to fall into the sins which this commandment so sternly forbids. A glance at the records of human experience which are given in Holy Scripture will show how largely untruthfulness enters into those combinations of motives which produce the grave catastrophes of a moral fall. Only in the little circle of our Lord's apostles there is displayed the untruthfulness of fear and the untruthfulness of avarice playing their deadly part. The devil, who is certainly not unacquainted with the methods of destruction, seems to act so uniformly in this direction that he is known as 'the father of lies,' and a lie even in its most naked form is not beneath those who call themselves Christians and pride themselves on the nobility of their conduct. A lie is a coward's refuge, and is a distinct act of unbelief, for it regards man, who is seen and menacing, and pays no regard to God, Who is out of sight and patient under the insult.

It is easy to buy off the Danes who threaten disgrace, and to rob us of a position gained by much toil and care, the lie is quickly told and the relief is immediate; but soon they are back again and demand a bigger price to secure their retirement. At first S. Peter simply denied and the danger passed away, but soon it returned, and this time a denial was not enough: 'Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.'[1] In the old German legend a huntsman, to further his own ends, seeks the devil; together they cast seven bullets, six of them are to strike and bring down whatever the caster wills, but the seventh is to belong to the devil and recoil and strike him who fires it, while he is never certain which bullet he is putting into the rifle, and at last he is struck dead by his own shot; so

[1] S. Matt. xxvi. 74.

the career bolstered up by lies answers for a time; at last comes the fatal move which recoils with fearful effect upon him who uses such weapons, and covers him with shame and dishonour.

Neither is it the simple lie alone which violates this commandment. There is the equivocation which speaks words in themselves true but which convey a false impression. There is the serviceable lie which does duty in the times of a general election or to promote a party measure; or the subterfuge which contrives to push on one side the inconvenient question, the answer to which would rouse popular prejudice on one side or the other. There is the blind forgetfulness of the plighted word, when such remembrance might be a cause of personal hindrance. There is the lie which is half the truth, the advertising lie, the exaggeration, the scandal, the habitual inaccuracy, the cynicism which takes the brightness out of excellence and the refinement from truth, and all that brood of evil which is gathered up into his name who is known as the devil or slanderer.

It is something that public opinion still affects to despise the baseness of one who is not true, while it drives him away and dethrones him from the pinnacle of respect. And what is this but a reflection of that righteous wrath which at the end will cast away for ever from the golden city and from the home of truth whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie?[1]

VI

The last commandment, to the observation of which the Christian finds himself pledged, resembles the preceding in this, that it takes us through its broken hedge right up into the sacred region of our Blessed Lord's Passion. The sin of covetousness played a large part in the betrayal which brought about the

[1] Rev. xxi. 27.

Crucifixion; and it was this sin that stole away the heart of an apostle at his very Master's side. Judas stands, as it were, beside this commandment to warn us from considering covetousness merely as an anti-social offence, or as a breach of good manners, or as pushing the spirit of enterprise too far. It was this inner sin, largely unknown and unsuspected by those with whom he was most intimate, which led him who had given up all gradually to retract the offer of his life's service, and led him, by pilfering, to a gradual deterioration of character, until, in the awful language of Holy Scripture, he went to his own place.[1]

The history of Judas Iscariot must ever be a menacing and disquieting one to those who feel safe in the sincerity of their profession and in the consciousness of their own devotion to the cause of religion. For he himself seemed to be barely conscious of whither he was drifting, and when he was accused as a traitor, his companion apostles, in their perplexity and dismay, could say nothing else but, each thinking of himself and suspecting his own fidelity, 'Lord, is it I?'

And so this commandment has a characteristic of its own, which distinguishes it from all the rest, and renders its scope unusually undefined and difficult. We have thought of commandments which govern our words and our actions, but who but God can carry a commandment into the region of thought? This precept has to do with motives in that region where no human law reaches, which lies outside the cognisance of the closest and most intimate friend, where a man himself may easily be taken in, and find out all too late that the desire which he attributed to peculiarity of temperament, or right ambition, or worldly prudence, or, at the most, a trifling discontent, stands forth as a sin in the eyes of God, ranking with murder, adultery, and theft.

[1] Acts i. 25.

It may well be questioned whether enough attention is given to this sin. Covetousness is a great deal more than a merely social fault. The covetous man will never be a popular character, for he thrives on that which he subtracts from the portion of others. Certainly, in its most aggravated form, human experience is unanimous in condemning his conduct; the man who hoards up money for money's sake is the *miser*, the miserable one, who has misunderstood the true use and significance of money, and is as much to be pitied as the man in the fable who prayed that all that he touched might turn to gold.

And yet, as compared with the spendthrift or the dishonest man, the world would be disposed to make allowances for him, and to think it, at the worst, a disagreeable peculiarity, that a man should so love his own interests as to forget his social duties.

But Holy Scripture takes a much more severe view than this of the offence. It is emphatic in asserting that covetousness is a sin. We read of 'the covetous, whom God abhorreth.'[1] 'Thefts, covetousness, wickedness,' we are told, 'come from within, and defile the man.'[2] 'Take heed and beware of covetousness': says our Blessed Lord once more, 'for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.'[3] Or again, 'Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.'[4] Once more, 'For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.'[5] While it is startling to notice that it is so often associated with uncleanness, as if it were a characteristic of this sin that it should be stamped with the marks of unbridled desire.

[1] Ps. x. 3. [2] S. Mark vii. 22, 23. [3] S. Luke xii. 15.
[4] 1 Cor. vi. 10. [5] Ephes. v. 5.

In its manifestations this sin is multiform. In its most simple form it can be traced as greediness, as it shows itself in the child, and reaches on sometimes into gluttonous old age. In the modern cult of undenominationalism, where an attempt is made to inculcate virtues apart from religion, there is no little danger in this direction. One of the especial virtues of this form of religion is thrift, in itself an excellent thing, but if unbalanced by religious safeguards very easily pressed into a dangerous attitude of mind which runs counter to the commandment of God. The child who has his account at the Savings Bank, and can hoard up postage-stamps, may very easily begin to believe that it is more blessed to receive than to give. The saving child may very easily become a greedy child, and perhaps develop into one of those fathers who murders his son in order that he may secure the money for which he has insured him.

In the face of the cult of thrift there must be also the cult of giving. Almsgiving after all, not thrift, was the burden of our Lord's treatment of money in the Sermon on the Mount. And it is only too possible to develop in ourselves a spirit of avarice which, commencing with greediness and love of self, is continued in that spirit which withholds from God His due, and from man his rights.

But perhaps the most common development of the sin against which this commandment is directed is discontent. Men reach out after something which God has not given them, and, like the dog in the fable, they drop the substance while snatching at the shadow. The neighbour's house, the neighbour's wife, his ox or ass, represent something which he has and we have not, and the history of Naboth's vineyard repeats itself. The desire for the thing coveted outweighs all considerations as to the manner of getting it, and dishonesty, robbery, defamation of character, even murder,

quickly follow in the train of ill-regulated love of acquisition. The desire to get on, apparently so innocent, even laudable, encouraged by competitive examinations and rewarded with prizes, may once more, like thrift, if unbalanced and unguarded, lead to developments of conduct which are severely denounced by the prohibition of this commandment. In one class of life it leads the boy or girl to place themselves in posts of danger simply because high wages offer an attraction which they cannot resist. In another class of life it develops the unlovely character known as the disappointed man, who neglects the obvious duties which God has put before him, and does the little he consents to do grudgingly and unwillingly because his heart has gone after this or that post of honour to which God has not called him, and for which he is daily more and more disqualifying himself by being unfaithful in that which is least. Covetousness is at the bottom of many unhappy marriages, where money, or position, or personal attraction, not love, and honour, and worth, are the ruling motives. It is covetousness which seeks to demolish the reputation of another in order to rise higher upon the ruins. And there are few sins in which it does not appear as a motive ever pushing forward self, which is never satisfied, in defiance of the great lesson of the Cross, which preaches self-denial, self-sacrifice, and contempt of the world to all who aspire to be followers of the Crucified.

So God exacts from His children a recognition of the rights of others so profound and so complete that not only are the outward duties of life safeguarded as they respect Him, but even the inner motives of the heart. 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.'[1]

[1] Rom. xiii. 10.

CHAPTER III

THE SERVICE OF GOD

Deus auctor pacis et amator, Quem nosse vivere: Cui servire regnare est.

Our Blessed Lord was once asked which was the great commandment in the Law,[1] as if there were some one precept or class of precepts which was the keystone to the whole fabric, which being duly observed all else might be regarded as negligible; and the answer He gave was tantamount to saying—the whole Law. There was a first commandment which enjoined the utter and complete love of God, and this carried with it a second, which embraced the complete love of our fellow-men; so that the Catechism is adapting the divine summary of the Law of God when it divides the commandments into two great divisions, which it explains and amplifies, the one as representing a man's duty towards God, and the other his duty towards his neighbour.

We hear a great deal of moral duties, but not so much of religious duties. An unreasonable dislike to the Church has resulted in many places in the silencing of her Catechism; undenominational ethics have been substituted as a study in place of religious precepts, with the sad result among others that the love of God and the service of God no longer take their places among the duties of life. Religion may be taught to those who desire it, but it is not included among the rudiments of useful knowledge, and

[1] S. Matt. xxii. 36.

godliness is no longer regarded as the root of good conduct, or holy fear as the best guardian of morality.

The 'Duty towards God' sounds in our ears with an old-fashioned ring about it which in itself is an indication of the growing chasm which separates us from the piety of the past. When Bishop Goodrich[1] penned this simple summary of *The Law of the Love of God*, the new learning was just beginning to apply its solvent to the old religious position now sadly weakened by superstition and faithlessness to spiritual and moral truth; he was still, however, removed by an interval of more than three hundred years from a godlessness which poses as anti-clericalism on the Continent and as unsectarianism in England.

His words must have sounded in the upheaval of the sixteenth century as a plaintive appeal not to forget God whilst wrangling about His service, or to make piety impossible by the fierceness of religious claims. There it stands, like an old building with its chapel and finial crosses, amidst a mass of modern shops, public buildings, and Government schools. It is the witness of an age when hitherto everything had been stamped with God, when the difference between secular and sacred barely existed, an age in which we sometimes feel it difficult to say, on looking back, whether at a given time the secular is overwhelming the sacred, or the sacred absorbing the secular. When the images of Christ and His saints looked down upon the busy streets, and the Judge sat on his tribunal, overshadowed with the everlasting arms stretched out on the cross behind him; when the image of Gabriel saluting Mary would greet the eye of the guest as he entered the rich man's house; and the citizen's hall of meeting, or the school, or the college would each appeal to the soul, with statue or legend, or glowing frieze, or brilliant fresco. Men were not

[1] See Introduction, p. 1.

ashamed of God in those days, nor thought it necessary to leave religion behind in the pressing affairs of daily life. Men did not then cast covetous eyes on churches within the precincts of their places of business, but rather vied with each other in building and adorning them. A Christian city of the middle ages must have been, as far as outward seeming went, a beautiful sight. It was the aim and object of men, like the author of this pious summary, to make the inward life correspond to the outward seeming, and to drive away the spirit of godlessness, which is summed up in the words of the Psalmist: 'Neither is God in all his thoughts.'[1]

Where the Catechism can make its voice to be heard, God and religion are not left to such chance respect as individual piety may suggest, or a conscience clause allow. The Christian child must be taught as soon as he can learn, and the Christian man must remember, lest the world make him forget, that his attitude towards God is regulated by duty, and stands in the forefront of all moral excellence.

Now this summary of 'The Law of the Love of God' postulates no less than nine attitudes of the soul towards the Author of its being, which may, for the sake of convenience, be gathered up into four.

We owe God a debt of belief, fear, love, and service, a service which will express itself in worship, thanksgiving, and trustfulness, while, like the seraphs whom Isaiah saw, the soul pours itself out with glad voice, veils itself in reverence, and devotes itself with a holy activity to follow the guidance of His will.

I

It seems almost of the nature of a hard saying to assert that we owe to God a belief in Him as a duty. There is almost an ostentatious assertion of the right

[1] Ps. x. 4.

to do without God, and to diminish as far as possible the field of the supernatural. Man is like a schoolboy just beginning to assert his independence, who resents anything which would suggest home influence or home duties. We see it in a contemptuous attitude towards Revelation and the mysteries of religion; we see it in daily life as it expresses itself in word and action. The verdict of a coroner's jury in 1890 passed upon a man who had been killed by lightning is symptomatic of the general attitude of modern thought. The verdict in question, correct enough no doubt in expression and enunciation of the cause of death, ran as follows: 'Death from exhaustion following shock caused by being struck by lightning'; on which the coroner dryly remarked that the old verdict used to be: 'Died by the visitation of God.'

It has been already suggested, under the head of the first commandment of those here summarised, that there is a constant temptation to live a life in which practically there is no God. This has been the real danger which underlies the demand that secular education only shall be entertained by the State, and religious education be left to denominational effort. Quite apart from any question of convenience or economy, or avoiding of controversy, such action would amount to a serious apostasy on the part of the nation, and would deprive religion of its rightful place as a permanent and all-important factor of education, and as an influence which should permeate all training.

But this summary is rather designed to bring home this belief in God as a personal duty, and to remind the Christian of the obligation that is laid upon him to a life of godliness, to carry out in his own life all that is meant by the power of moving in the felt presence of God, or, in one word, of being devout.

This in itself is one of the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit which is imparted at Baptism and Con-

firmation, which will lead a man to make God an ever-present influence and power, not merely a help reserved for occasions which transcend human foresight. The ordinary man who has not parted with religion believes that there is nothing too hard for the Lord, the devout man believes that there is nothing too small for Him.

A man who believes in God takes to Him his little troubles, and shares with Him his little joys. From the time of Enoch, who walked with God, to the days of S. John, who leaned on Jesus' bosom, and received His divine sympathy—this has been the privilege of the devout, to share their life with God, in all their ways to acknowledge Him, and to find in Him a director of their paths. And so, by believing in God as a deity, the Christian ends by reposing in Him as a friend.

And herein the old principle which is expressed in the word 'duty' and 'I ought' is in direct antagonism to the modern spirit of inclination and 'I like.'

It is unusual now for a child to be told that he ought to love God, to go to church, to be devout, because this is a duty incumbent upon him. As we have already seen in treating of the fourth commandment, modern sentiment has substituted the drawing of the individual inclination in the place of the obligation of duty.

And the result has not been successful. 'Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life,' and duty, like the Law of old, must be the slave to lead us down to the school of Christ. Even the priest must learn to say his *office* under the obligations laid upon him, *i.e.* by duty, before he realises in his daily devotions the strength and joy of his life. And until the ordinary Christian recognises the importance of a solid framework of prayer and devotion for his day, and the importance of days of religious obligation for his week, he will not enjoy the felt pleasures of devotion

and communing with God. Times of devotion, of meditation and communion, are the paths in which the Lord God walks in the garden in the cool of the day.[1] It is by following these up that we find ourselves in His Presence, and are able to repose in the light of His countenance, and feel that peace which passeth all understanding as the protection of our hearts and minds.

II

A glance at the stern obligations of the second and third commandments will show at once the wisdom of insisting not only on a belief in God, but also on a fear of Him. Here once more there has been a deliberate smoothing down, and even contemptuous rejection, of anything which speaks of the terror of the Lord. While many are asking anxiously and earnestly, How shall I perfect my nature, how shall I answer to the dignity of my calling, and respond to the wealth of my endowment? there are few anxious inquirers saying, 'What must I do to be saved?' 'How shall I flee from the wrath to come?' The thought of the day of judgment and the fear of hell are put on one side, with the warning clauses of the Athanasian Creed, as not only disagreeable topics, but as making an unworthy appeal to human nature which is, or should be, too dignified to be coaxed towards good by the promise of reward, or driven to it by the fear of punishment.

But further, the appeal to the fear of God as a motive of action, and as a duty, does but draw our attention to the significance of much which we must recognise, even if we cannot explain it, in the existing state of things in which life is passed. The signs of wrath are visible on all sides. It is for us to say whether they are the automatic results of wrong-doing, or the

[1] Gen. iii. 8.

unequal incidence of fate or luck ; or, as the Catechism would have us believe, the manifest tokens of a God Who is very greatly to be feared. It is a fact of every-day experience that wrong-doing is punished, and the punishment is such as to lead us to believe that it comes from the hands of God, Who has revealed Himself as a consuming fire, and has bid us not only to believe in Him, and to love Him, but to fear Him.

There would seem to be three well-defined forms of punishment which wait upon sin. First, there is that form which seizes on the imagination of mankind, where wrong-doing is succeeded in a striking and dramatic way by a corresponding and nicely adjusted penalty.

It would be difficult to eradicate the idea of retribution from the mind of the human race. Vengeance tracking the sinner through the long and devious error of his flight is a familiar figure in ancient Greek tragedy. Nero, the matricide, terrified by fearful sights and sounds which never leave him, and dying the death of a hunted dog, is sketched in, on the page of history, by those who recognised in it the appropriate retribution for a singularly atrocious crime.

In the highest of all examples of expiation the Christian recognises, in at least one aspect of the Atonement, pain and loss inflicted on the guiltless Son of God, because as Son of Man He represented fallen humanity, and paid the penalty of sin in the suffering which had been deserved by past wrong-doing, according to the Law of Righteousness, whereby 'if the penalties of sin are remitted, some other divine act, of at least equal intensity, in which the ill-desert of sin is expressed with at least equal energy, must take its place.'[1] The Atonement as a necessity of divine forgiveness emphasises, as nothing else can, the idea of retribution as a consequence following on sin.

[1] Dale, *The Atonement*, p. 391.

We are accustomed to trace the same principle of retribution in everyday experience. 'Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished,'[1] meets with a strange and terrible comment in the facts of daily life. Even more it can be said with the author of the book of Wisdom, 'Wherewithal a man sinneth by the same also shall he be punished,'[2] as we trace the nicely adjusted and carefully apportioned nature of the punishment, so that we see standing out behind the penalty inflicted the outline of the sin for which retribution is exacted. There are two striking examples of this in Holy Scripture. There is, in the first place, the graphic history of Jacob, in which truthfulness to life is stamped on every line of the narrative. Here it is not a little significant to notice how the troubles which overshadowed his later life so strangely took the shape of his sins committed in earlier years. As in a spring morning we may see the clouds which hang upon the mountain ridge strangely following their every peak and indentation, so it was with Jacob: he had played upon the hunger of his brother, and made a disgraceful bargain with a starving man, and we accordingly find famine playing a large part in the perplexities and troubles which dogged his footsteps. He had trifled with a father's love, and imposed upon his bodily infirmities that he might greedily snatch the blessing for which he could not wait; his own fatherly heart was rent with a cruel deception, and the trouble which followed in its path threatened to bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

The other instance is David, in whose history we have the example of a successful sin punished by a series of sorrows which lingered on to the end of his life. He, the anointed king of Israel, selfishly ruined a home through sin, and, penitent though he was, the

[1] Prov. xi. 21. [2] Wisdom, xi. 10.

sword never left his house; and in the rebellion of those nearest to him, in loss of respect, in the contempt of those who participated in his crime, he learnt how a man must expiate even a forgiven sin.

And this is the stern fact which meets us still in daily experience: penitence, amendment, conversion from the error of his ways do not remove from a man the retribution which is attached to his wrong-doing, at least in part. The penitent drunkard suffers the same penalties of ruined health, and the like, as the impenitent; while we have an extreme example of this retribution on wrong-doing in the penalty which, as a matter of notoriety, lingers on to after-descendants, whether in the scourge of hereditary taint, or in the lingering suffering which sometimes scars with a track of vengeance the sinner's race.

If it be said that retribution is by no means invariable, and that sometimes the comparatively innocent are punished while the guilty go free, it may be answered, that man is but a poor judge of comparative innocence and guilt, and that further, God's punishments are not always those which are striking and obvious: spiritual and mental punishments, penalties which a man hides beneath an outward composure or cheerful demeanour, may exceed in severity those which are more conspicuous; and that remorse, the sense of guilt or failure, may exceed in intensity the physical pain or dramatic penalties which are so striking to the imagination, and which contribute so convincingly to the widespread belief in an inevitable retribution inflicted by a God of Justice.

But there is a second form of punishment which it is still more easy to recognise, namely, that punishment which would seem to be inflicted as part of the moral discipline of the world.

If we hesitate to accept the idea of retribution, we shall at least feel that the punishment of sin, which

acts as a deterrent to other offenders, is of necessity a component part in the due and proper regulation of human conduct.

The punishment which awaits wrong-doing is a powerful deterrent to those who have not a sufficient love of the true, the beautiful, and the good as their best happiness, or a sufficiency of moral strength to stand alone. God's punishment on sin as a penalty inflicted by a law-giver is a conception with which we are familiar, and for which, while we fear Him, we may also earnestly thank Him.

It may seem to be a sorry thing that a man should follow the ways of God, only because he is afraid of Him: that he should hesitate to sin because he fears the penalty of his misdeeds. Fear may not be the highest motive, but it is a motive which may pave the way for that which is higher than itself. Certainly it is a strength and support to a man to feel, that he has to do with a God of Justice, and not merely with a kindly and indulgent Father Whom he may talk over, and Who will allow him to sin and then remit the penalty of it. This is a conception of God (or, in the form it sometimes takes, of a complacent saint who will intervene between man and the punishment of his sins) which is absolutely fatal to a true and healthy morality. A conception of God which allows a man to sin and confess, to confess and sin, to keep his sins and at the same time to evade the penalty of them by a dexterous travesty of penitence, is fatally opposed to any true conception of His goodness. There is no attribute of God more to be cherished than that of His Justice. And the punishment which follows on sin as a corrective is part of the education of the world. Without it, children as we are, we ourselves should lose the strength of a strong deterrent, without it religion and the mercy of God would be but encouragements to the moral deterioration of the race;

the child of God may now feel God will forgive, but still will punish, instead of feeling the enervating expectancy of a punishment averted in the face of a guilty desert, by One Who has accepted the feeble prayer of the sinner who has not the strength to suffer nor the bravery to expiate his offence.

There yet remains a third conception of punishment as inflicted by Almighty God, for which indeed He is to be feared, and yet to be thanked.

Punishment is not only a deterrent, a penalty which adds to the moral instruction of the world, it is also a discipline to the individual of the greatest value.

When a man is being punished he may feel that he is in the hands of a loving God, Who is too loving not to punish, because He wills our perfection. We should know, even if God had not told us, that 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.'[1] It is only the child who calls out against the pain which is to bring him healing. One of God's sorest judgments is that recorded in the Prophets, where He says, 'I will not punish.'[2] It is the surgeon refusing to operate in a hopeless case; it is the abandoning by Him, Who knows that His healing hand will be rejected and His discipline refused. So by the cross of suffering is humanity perfected. Discipline is the chisel which is to let the angel out from the rough block of our life, and hammer out the image and likeness of God which has been overlaid and disfigured by sin. In view of God's chastisement the soul may say, 'For there is mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared.'[3]

III

The Love of God, once more, is not left to us as a matter of inclination, but in its turn is imposed as a duty. Here, in two ways, it might seem to be a strange

[1] Heb. xii. 6. [2] Hos. iv. 14. [3] Ps. cxxx. 4.

thing to be commanded to love God. It might be supposed, that God being what He is, such a command would be unnecessary; while we being what we are, it would very easily become inoperative.

God is certainly our oldest friend. He not only has known us from our birth, but in the secrets of His predestination has caused us to be, and sent us into the world knowing what we should become. It is He Who watched over those infant years, when we were so uninteresting except to those who formed a very small circle round us, so opposed to the rough ways and needs of the world, showing such little signs of individuality, capacity, or importance. It is He Who watched over those perilous years of education, and shielded us through the attacks of bodily, moral, and spiritual disease. He is our guide unto death, true to His unswerving promise, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'[1] He is also our best friend; all that we have of good comes from Him; but the chiefest blessings of our life, our Baptism, our Confirmation, our Absolutions, our Communions, our Bible, we feel in an especial manner come from Him. While more than all, He is the constant friend Who will not give up the prodigal. The world has long turned with shuddering horror from the youth who, following its ways, has found himself naked and among swine, but God has never given up the hopes of his return, and awaits him without a reproach with food, and raiment, and honour. God being what He is, what He has proved Himself to be, surely we do not need to be commanded to love Him.

But it also remains true, that human nature being what it is, we have to ask anxiously, How can I have imposed on me as a duty that to which presumably I may have no inclination? If my heart loves God, as it ought to do, it will love Him

[1] Heb. xiii. 5.

spontaneously in a way to which no obligation of duty could add either force or inducement. On the other hand, if my heart is cold and rebellious, the fact that I ought to love God does not make any easier or more possible the wayward and feeble flickerings which I seem hardly able to evoke towards the great God, much less dignify by the name of love. Here, perhaps, the author may be allowed to quote more fully the helpful passage from Dr. Mozley's great volume of sermons to which he has already briefly alluded in another work:[1] 'All agree that we cannot make our own *feelings*. We can make ourselves perform certain acts by an effort of the will, but this is a very different thing from making our inclinations go along with them. It is evident then that we do not possess this power over ourselves. How often indeed do we wish we did, when we know we ought to feel something which we do not feel: when we are conscious of doing something coldly and indifferently which we ought to do with real heart. . . . Are we to stop here; to say that our affections are simply out of our power, and that if we have them it is well, if not, we cannot help it? To leave the subject thus would be far from satisfactory, and would hardly be in accordance with the exhortations in Scripture, to strive after the spiritual dispositions and good affections, as if they were in some way connected with our wills, and our use of them. . . . The first explanation to which we have recourse is the simple doctrine of habits—that although we cannot by an effort of the will produce an affection or inclination at *the time*, a succession of such acts will at last produce it, that it is of the nature of habits to make acts easier and easier, till what was at first distasteful, at last becomes pleasant. . . . But this act, let it be ever so often repeated, and

[1] *The Fruit of the Spirit*, p. 18. Mozley's *Sermons*, 'The Work of the Spirit,' pp. 153, 154.

facilitated by repetition, can never become a feeling, but must always remain in substance what it was to begin with, an act of self-control, only made easier instead of more difficult; it cannot pass into another thing from what it was at first.

'But though acquired habit is not strictly *in itself* of the nature of a feeling or affection, it has a connection, and an important one, with the due growth of the feelings, in the way that it removes obstructions which stand in the way of their coming out, and obtaining their proper place in the character.

'There is undoubtedly a root of love at the bottom of the human heart, which it has received from God, and which only requires the removal of the pressure of other matter upon it, to bring it out as the true part of man. But there is too apt to be an immense pressure upon it, as we can plainly see. There is the pressure upon it of selfish aims and desires of all kinds, low cares, jealousies, enmities, and the general agitation of worldly life. It is impossible that this implanted feeling or love can come out as a real force and power in our nature, so long as it is overwhelmed and crushed by a mixed mass of secular and indifferent motives, which occupy the whole mind, *e.g.* malice, irritation, etc. There must be acts of the will to resist this adverse occupation of the mind, to remove these bad feelings and passions: then in proportion as the ground clears and room is given to the good ones, these good feelings and affections have a natural tendency of their own to come up and take possession of the vacant space. It is because the good part of our nature has been kept down by a weight upon it that it has not acted. . . . Thus though it is true that we cannot make ourselves feel at the time by an act of the will, acts of the will do eventually, not create feelings indeed, for feeling is a divine gift, but elicit and bring it into play, by removing the obstruction to it.'

So it will be with the love for God; if we can but move the obstructions, the love for other things which keep it down, it will assert itself in the region of the feelings at the call of duty.

And yet this love of God which we owe Him as a duty is to be no half-hearted emotion, it is to be a thorough and complete rendering up of the will to His Will. We are to love Him with all the heart, with all the mind, with all the soul, and with all the strength. And so in its completest manifestation it becomes the love of a person to a Person Who holds a unique place in the heart to which all other love for all other persons is subordinate. This has been exhibited in the mystic raptures of the saints in language and in action which have been a puzzle and even a cause of offence to their sober-minded biographers; it has not been lost sight of in the psychological criticism of Saintliness put before us in a recent study of human nature on its phenomenal side.[1] But this love of God is displayed no less in the love of the things commanded by God as absolutely the best, and of supreme obligation. So it has been admirably said in a recent review of a life of S. Francis and his followers. 'The Franciscan mysticism was opposed to the mysticism of the East, because its rule of life enforced an incessant daily personal activity—making of spiritual rapture a reward for work accomplished, and not a substitute for work disdained.'... So also, 'St. Francis did not ask for, or dream of, the equalisation of chances or the fairer distribution of the world's wealth. Social inequality never troubled him: he never fought against it because he never admitted its importance or its existence. That burning sense of a common claim upon the goods of life, and the opportunities and the satisfactions of life, which lies at the root of all socialism, was entirely indifferent to him and to his

[1] See James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 276.

immediate followers. To them, as to the little children who shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, the love of all created things filled the universe with ineffable and engrossing joys. Love was their answer to every human problem. Love of God, of man, of animal and plant, and running water and earthly stone. . . . Love, which is its own reward, and willing poverty, which stands for much freedom, and the emancipation of the care-encrusted soul of man, made up their creed and practice.'[1]

IV

And so we come to the service of God, which is no less a duty than His faith, fear, or love. And this service includes worship and prayer, trust in His guidance, respect for His will and orders, and an entire devotion to duty. It means the whole giving of self to the work which God has given him to do by the man who has just given himself wholly to God. It is difficult to secure either for worship or for prayer any recognition in the department of work. It is true that the idea still lives on in belated terms out of a discredited vocabulary. Men and women still attend devotions in church, which they know by the name of 'service.' A cleric still calls those prayers and praises which the Church lays upon him by the name of 'office.' And the old-fashioned phrase was wont to remind the parish priest that he had 'to take his duty' at least on Sundays.

But now the platform rather than the Church is at all events the field in which to display activity. A missionary is required to be a man, a student, a gentleman, and an athlete, but piety is taken for granted. There are many men fired with the ambition

[1] *St. Francis and his Followers*, by Anne Macdonell. Reviewed, the *Times*, Dec. 12, 1902.

of being good organisers, good preachers, good educators: are there many labouring to qualify themselves as men of prayer?

And yet what a large demand is made in Holy Scripture not only on the strength, but on the time of man, for especial and direct offering of worship and homage unto God. The attempts to disparage the Old Testament have led men less and less to study it, less and less to listen to the divine principles which are embodied even in those commandments which were local and transitory, and certainly the conception of a busy priest whose business lies away from the direct service of God does not emerge there. The direct service of God was a first charge on time, and became the all-absorbing joy and delight of those who gave themselves up to it, as we still see in the rapture and exultation of the Psalms, which sometimes sound strangely on modern lips, where the man on duty who discharges an unwilling service is heard to declare that one day in God's house is 'better than a thousand.' Much remains to be done in bringing before the minds of people something of what is meant by services of obligation, and a recognition of that principle which stood out so clearly in the life of our Blessed Lord on earth, Who refused all exemption from the ordinances of God which were binding on the ordinary Jew, and Who received circumcision, the Baptism of S. John, the ordinary instruction of the Rabbis, attended the feasts of obligation, and frequented the temple, showing us what is meant by the service of God.

We have already considered in a previous volume of this series the principles which seem to underlie worship and thanksgiving as the glad recognition on the part of creatures endowed with free-will of that absolute rightness and fitness of the will of God, which other created things express by their ordered working and regulated functions; so we are prepared to see

that a perfect trust in God forms part of the service due to Him from His sons and daughters. Distrust of the ways of God has formed a prominent hindrance to His perfect service from the very first. A timid people mistook their peculiarity for isolation, and wished to be as the other nations. Rulers inaugurated a faithless policy of Egyptian alliances and a trust in the arm of flesh. So it is now; a passing wave or fashion of unbelief will drive into a frenzy of fear those who hold in trust the ordinances and designs of God. The peculiar doctrines and dogmatic precision of the Church, instead of being her pride, become her shame. And the creeds are emasculated of all that savours of sternness, or which might offend the refined sensibilities of those who have no particular desire to win Heaven, nor any particular anxiety as to escaping Hell. We do not trust God when He uses sternness as a necessary part of our education, and tells us the truth as to the dangers with which we are encompassed. When doctors are pronouncing with ever greater emphasis their monitory clauses as to the physical damnation which underlies much of our most refined luxury, when men of science are loud in their proclamation of the dangers which lie very close to the wonders of modern machinery and electricity, the Church alone in her faithlessness to God's warnings is tempted to cast aside the salutary warnings which proclaim that a right faith is necessary to salvation, and that strait is the gate and narrow the way which leads to real life here and hereafter, and that there are few that find it; and this service of God must never cease with life.

There are different forms of service for different periods of a man's career. There is the vigorous service of youth which lays all its strength and ardour at the feet of God. There is the service of the matured and developed life which has answered to

the call of God assigning his post of usefulness. And there is the service of those who suffer, the service of those who wait still upon God, who, out of the quiet of an old age, stand in the more immediate Presence, as they linger on the threshold of eternity, and look for the privilege of those who serve God day and night in His heavenly temple.

CHAPTER IV

THE SERVICE OF MAN

There is no injunction of a general love of men, φιλ-ανθρωπία, in God's word. He who is not our brother is our neighbour.

> This above all—to thine own self be true;
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

We have had occasion already, while treating of the six last commandments, to notice the growing claims of that personality known as our neighbour; all, that is, with whom we are brought in contact in the vicissitudes of life, all to whom we minister, all who minister to us, all with whom in mysterious connection we work out the eternal purpose of God. Now a man forgets the sacredness of his own individuality; now he can remember nothing else; now he is submerged in the crowd; now he recognises no rights but his own. God has given us the conception of neighbour, we have evolved the idea of rival, the man who dwells on the other side of the stream, ever seeking to intrude and encroach, a Naboth whose chief offence is his thoughtless claim on property for which we have conceived a desire. The records of the world's conflicts, the statute-books of civilised countries, the manners and customs of savages are all comments on the misunderstood, ill-learnt lesson of neighbourliness; and we may thank God that He has enforced as a duty that

which men are so little disposed to accept as a principle of perfection.

See the little child, a mass of wants and desires, in a world which as yet he only knows as something which occasionally gives him pain, and from which he demands chiefly the satisfaction of his cravings. It takes some time for him to realise other personalities which are not self, with their claims on the same surroundings, at least as beings who are not put there merely to minister to his wants. Until there opens up before him, first the conception of those who make demands on him, in the way of love, obedience, or respect, then the idea of some one who may be to him an *alter ego* in the mysteries of friendship; then further, and with difficulty, the conception of those who have rights and claims upon him simply because they are men, a conception which receives its most complete and utter development in the love of enemies, where personal bitterness, estrangement and injury are swept away and merged in the rights to active love which one human being has from another. 'The duty towards my neighbour' sets before us this graduated conception.

In the first place, it begins and ends with a distinct and emphasised presentment of self. The instinct of the infant is a right one; for the purposes of his life, and the purposes of God's plan, he is to be the centre of the environment in which he finds himself. The way to do my duty to my neighbour is to do my duty to myself. And the measure of my love to him will be the measure of my love for self; and the best remedy for greediness which feeds on the rights of others is to 'learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.' The infant is right in his instinct of self-importance, the welfare and happiness of the world depends on the fullness and completeness of its working units. The rightness or

wrongness of his subsequent career depends on his ideas and methods of developing self.

We have much to remind us of our insignificance, many humiliations to guard us from conceit, it is worth while therefore at times to realise our own importance. It is sad to see how little men and women realise their own worth, and to witness the many useless lives that are being lived in the world. There are men and women who are like the lay figures in the shop windows, so many forms on which to hang clothes, or glittering decorations. There are those who are like animals in some zoological garden, who are fed and looked at, and commented on, and admired, or the contrary, and then pass away to be succeeded by new occupants of the cage, fresh candidates for popular admiration, or a new addition to the world's show. There are many of course who have not found their life's work, and who bury their one talent because they cannot find any use for it; but God will soon point out His work to those who are ready to take it up, and have recognised their own value. Some have tried to maintain that the service of our neighbour can be performed at the expense of self-neglect and self-degradation, that a spendthrift who wastes his substance is a good distributor of money, that a good-natured libertine adds to the stock of the world's easy merriment, and that if he is any man's enemy he is his own. This is not the conception which underlies the strong sketch of the good neighbour in the Catechism. Self, as we have seen, is an honoured standard of measurement by which to estimate a neighbour's claim to love. And further, it is by self-development in the appointed line of duty that the store is accumulated, and the way of life smoothed, in whose orderly tranquillity others can do their allotted work, and reap the satisfaction of the proper discharge of their functions in the scheme of God.

We recognise that a good man does good by setting

a high example. We recognise that a good citizen is of a distinct and appreciable value to the State where he lives, inasmuch as he contributes to the taxes and imposts, and adds to the general good government of the community. It is not so commonly recognised that, quite apart from good example, there is a distinct profit to the community to be derived from the ordered life of hidden goodness: that it is better for us that our neighbour simply and conscientiously does his duty: that his submission to authority, and complete regulation of his desires, makes it easier for us to move in our appointed orbit under the impulse of duty; that the regular performance of his religious duties to God, including therein the service of man, contributes more to the moral welfare of the community than his money and public service do to the public welfare of the body politic.

A really good man will *ipso facto* be a good neighbour, and will tend by a reciprocity to make others reflections of his own work. Our neighbour, then, first takes bodily shape in the form of those who have claims on our childish love, obedience and respect. The father and the mother are the first natural points of contact with the great conception of 'neighbour' in which the subsequent life is to be developed. Man has no meaning standing alone, his nature demands for its complement relationship with others; and so in natural order, and most often in fact the parents elicit those first feelings which are not selfish, and exact those first obligations which are not optional, but in the nature of things imposed as a duty, which widen out through friend and foe in varying degrees of respect, love, or esteem to all the world.

Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.[1] The whole world is my neighbour, and I must love my neighbour as myself.

[1] Terence, *Heaut. Tim.* i. 1. 25.

In dealing with the rights of those who have especial claims upon us, the Catechism puts in chronological order the dealing of child with parent as first of all arousing the feeling of love, and then, as life expands, of honour as from those who recognise their position, and then as life goes on demanding the right of succour and even support in the reversal of relationship which springs up with advancing age.

Here it is well to notice once more the full significance of the idea of duty. The hedge of God's commandments would seem to be planted chiefly for the sake of those who are most disposed to stray unless kept in by the bristling barrier of a restriction. The child whose affection and conscience are rightly regulated may be trusted to love good and kind parents, to recognise, as he grows up, the honour due to the earthly authors of his being, and the right that they have to his succour and protection. But with the careless child of bad or even cruel parents it is not always recognised that, as with the love of God, so with the love of man, it is not merely an irresponsible feeling, to be expressed where it exists, and to be withheld where there is no precedent inclination. The love of parents is a duty laid upon all. Bad parents as well as good are to be honoured, and thriftless parents as well as those who have been benevolent to their children are to be succoured by them in distress or in old age.

Surely there is a need to recall ourselves to first principles as regards family duty, in that which is the unit of social life. The initial fear of being the parents of large families is in itself a bad sign. A man who is a citizen first and a father afterwards, a woman who is benevolent first and a mother afterwards, have both of them wrong ideas, even as to the true welfare of the State. And it is not difficult to see when the fear of a diminishing income, or the fear

of losing time and capacity for pleasure, bend the will in the same direction that selfishness of the worst kind is ousting duty.

The same spirit needs watching in the relationship of children with parents in modern society. A reaction from austerity seems likely to degenerate into a flippant friendship, or a studied aloofness as between friends or acquaintance on a basis of equality, rather than as between child and parent. Children will now call their parents by nick-names, mock at their infirmities, reject their interference, shun their society, or treat them with condescension as equals, or with toleration as inferiors. The honour due to parents as such is a safeguard in a world which has been ruined by the pursuit of an inclination in defiance of a duty, and where the only chance of salvation is by observing the barriers of restraint, and in following the trend of obedience to authority.

So selfishness had to be repressed, which regarded the world of men and things as existing only for self. Then love and respect to parents had to be grafted as a duty upon natural inclination, and then the idea of authority widened into the recognition of all who had claims on honour and obedience, whether the king, or magistrates, or teachers, or those who were in any sense our 'betters.' Here the Catechism is sharply arraigned first by those who disclaim any arrangement of society which interferes with the absolute equality of man, and secondly by those who fail to recognise any arbitrary distinctions of rank or position, or any aristocracy but the absolute aristocracy of merit which a man wins for himself, and maintains by his own efforts. The absolute equality of man is too obviously in conflict with even nature's distribution of honours to need any serious recognition; but the right of king, or governor, or teacher, or spiritual pastor, or master, as such, to honour and respect is not so obvious, while the idea

of 'betters' seems to be a survival of the worst times of vulgar servility. Is it so? Does not the principle which the English nation seems to have firmly grasped with regard to the monarchy, hold good in other departments of rank which claim our recognition? We have already seen that while we despise a John Lackland, we can still acclaim a King John. It may be that Queen Victoria rescued the sentiment of loyalty which had been almost crushed out of the English nation by her Hanoverian predecessors. Still it is there, strong and vigorous, intelligently held and fearlessly expressed. Why should the same sentiment be withheld in its subordinate expression as the recognition of a great and authoritative position, even where the particular incumbent is unworthy of his office? There is no difficulty in recognising the right to our respect of those who uphold the majesty of the Law. Those, for instance, who would remain covered in court in the presence of a judge, would speedily be reminded of their duty, and would recognise the justice of their reproof. Respect for the majesty of law outweighs any disrespect for the particular person who administers it. Why should a similar respect be withheld from a teacher who is incapable of enforcing it? Is not the possession of learning a claim to respect? May he not be honoured as the representative of a great profession, even if he himself seems to be unworthy of honour? It is recorded of Edward Thring, headmaster of Uppingham, that he would treat the actual school-room almost as if it were a sacred place, to be adorned with art and beauty, to pay honour, as he would say, 'to lessons.'

The absolute freedom of intercourse between master and scholar is not unmixed gain, if it diminishes the honour due not merely from boy to man, but from a boy to the incumbent of one of the world's greatest posts of honour, to the steward of learning.

So again with 'spiritual pastors and masters.' There have been ages, and there are countries, where the separation is complete between the man and his office; where the *sacerdotium* is honoured as a divine and splendid thing, while the priest is despised for himself and his failings. Here again in England the tide seems to be setting strongly in the other direction at the present moment. Men for the sake of the individual shortcomings, despise the office, and refuse the respect due to it as such. No doubt much harm is done to religion by the careless lives of clergy, but more harm is done by the unsparing criticism and the grudging recognition of the claims of the clergy as such to respect and obedience. Mr. Gladstone set the good example of a resolute refusal to criticise the sermon, however bad, which had been just addressed to him by the minister of God. But now, not only the sermon, but every action of those who minister to us in the name of God, appear to be ridiculed and criticised by those who would seem to be eager to show their revenge on religion for the restraints which it imposes, by pulling down from their pedestal those who proclaim its blessings and its threats.

But the duty of submission to authority as due to our neighbour is most fiercely assailed when it takes the form of ordering 'myself lowly and reverently to all my betters.' Who are my betters other than those who have been already indicated as wielding a delegated authority in an official position? Are we in danger of putting ourselves under a yoke riveted by social inequality and the claim to respect on the part of those who rather merit our contempt?

> The glories of our birth and state
> Are shadows, not substantial things.

Is respect for ancestry, for superior birth, for social rank, anything but a delusion based on the innate

vulgarity of human nature and a survival of feudal abuses, a spirit once for all driven away in a whirlwind of convulsion in the upheaval of the French revolution?

The distinction between gentleman and non-gentleman is one which is very difficult to maintain, and yet it is a distinction which experience would forbid any sensible man to ignore in practice. No one who has had experience of work, and of work with others in the world, will deny the extraordinary merit, undefined and indefinable, which underlies that term 'gentleman.' A man may betray it and be false to it, another of inferior grade and humbler origin may surpass him in the nobility of character and unselfish chivalry which we associate with the term. Still it is there, a fineness of nature, a refinement in moral fibre, which is not to be ignored even in that *corruptio* of frivolous and dissolute living which is in every sense *pessima*. There are race-horses and cart-horses, there are various breeds of oxen and other animals, quite apart from their respective adaptations for their several works: and there would seem to be a distinction in human birth, a power in pedigree which may not be ignored even if it be despised. The recognition of 'our betters' in social rank is by no means a thing to be discredited or destroyed. There is a strong growth of reactionary feeling in this direction, but not always with the happiest results. Civility, courtesy, reverence, are in themselves such beautiful virtues, that the sphere of their expression should be enlarged rather than restricted. It is possible now to contrast the old type with the new in country districts, where modern ideas have not largely penetrated. Here the old labourer who was brought up under the influence of the teaching of forty or fifty years ago, will meet the stranger whom he recognises as being in a higher grade of the social scale, with a civil gesture, with polite reverence and a respectful greeting. 'Sir' and 'madam' on his lips

suggest no sort of servility, but are part of the order and regulation of a well-governed society. On the other hand the modern workman, who knows no betters, who has been taught, it may be, that to recognise distinctions of rank is but a sign of slavery, will slouch by with defiant mien, with no sign of recognition or token of respect even as between man and man.

It is quite possible that civility and the ordinary salutation as due to a superior may be part of the ritual which safeguards many precious refinements of character. The word ὕβρις has an ugly history: and the recognition of 'our betters' in those of a higher social rank may safeguard, more than we think, some of the most delicate traits of human excellence.

It is even more difficult to see 'our betters' in those who are merely the possessors of great wealth, who with a great sum have obtained that position to which others were born: and very often from their vulgar display and reckless extravagance, they are more to be despised than honoured. Still in a sense the possessor of wealth is to be honoured, not for himself, but for his position. As with the extreme advocates of temperance reform, so with those who are most opposed to the horrors of a plutocracy, there is a danger of confusing the familiar use and abuse of that which is in itself a gift of God. In a day when money is being treated with reckless and criminal levity, there would seem to be more and more a duty incumbent on thinking men to treat the possession of it with seriousness and even respect. The question is often asked, What is the precise sin of gambling and betting? Why, if a man can afford it, may he not buy his recreation in this way as in any other? Quite apart from the consequences to others, and the secondary accidents of evil incident to it, what is the harm of the practice in itself, viewed *simpliciter*? Would it not be fair to say, that money in itself is too sacred a

thing in view of what it represents in face of the world's needs, and that the use of money is too serious a responsibility, for it to be expended in such trivial and unworthy ways? Many men who could well afford the waste, would yet be ashamed to be seen deliberately throwing away loaves of bread in the face of a starving multitude. Quite apart from waste of time and bad example, and all the evil consequences that follow, is the mere fact of gambling wrong, because it is putting money to an unworthy purpose, and degrading it from its great possibilities?

If this be so, it is possible, and perhaps even right, to regard the possessors of immense wealth as entitled to our respect, as those who are the possessors of immense power, and who are the incumbents of a post of great responsibility as stewards for God of the wealth which has been entrusted to them.

Most men are prepared to recognise in the great, the successful, the honoured ones of the world, those who are their betters. Hero worship, if it has its dangers, is not always and everywhere to be despised. He is much to be pitied who passes through the world without the consciousness of inferiority to others, at least in some departments of life, who withholds the outward expression of respect because he clutches at an equality, who tries to pull down by detraction to his own level those whom the world has elevated to posts of honour, who makes the world poorer and more dreary by the spread of a shabby mediocrity, in a jealous pride which fears servility, and in a self-adulation which has learned even to despise merit.

After the recognition of those who have claims upon his natural love, obedience, and respect, there arises in most cases the predominant love and devotion towards one and another in the sacred ties of friendship. It is true that this is to be inferred rather than directly gathered from this summary of

neighbourly duty. But the universal love of all men, is accentuated and emphasised by the particular love of one, or at least of a few. A conspicuous example of this is to be seen in the case of our Blessed Lord, Who although He came as the Saviour of all men, and for all, yet willed to single out twelve especial companions of His ministerial life, and of these whom He loved, one especially, S. John, whom He loved as His own familiar friend in the ties of an intimate affection. Friendship, in its responsibilities and duties as well as in its opportunities, is a subject of great importance in those who recognise their duty towards their neighbour and the power of affecting or being affected by others in the ties of companionship.

Much has been written about friendship in its origin, essence, and development. Thinking men have discovered that which God indeed has revealed, that it is not good for the man to be alone; and the welfare of the world would seem to be bound up, not only in the individual improvement of single beings, but in the mutual help and co-operation of man with man, whereby the fuller life is developed. It may be that the earliest awakenings of friendship for others is due to a sense of pleasure or even of advantage to be gained, but to most men there comes the time when the answering agreement of mind with mind, which cannot be hid,[1] produces that perfect sympathy of friendship wherein one becomes to the other the half of his own self. The joys of friendship and the sacredness of the tie which binds friends together are commonplaces in the record of human experience. Friendship chiefly detains us now as a stage in that universal love for all, who have become or shall become our neighbours, and as an example of what is meant by loving another as oneself.

Sacrifice of self even unto death has been the pre-

[1] Aristot., *Nic. Eth.* viii. 2.

vailing characteristic of true friendship, an unsparing, uncalculating devotion to another, which in its turn has developed some of the finest points in character: friend complementing friend, the fulness of one supplying the deficiency of another, and mutual love and esteem supplying a common interest in life's work, which renders the work of friends so many circles of living fire upon the earth. It is to the extension of friendly love that the Catechism looks, until we view in all who cross our path, a neighbour who is another self, whom we should learn to treat with the same unselfish devotion which we lavish on our familiar friends. If the heart which feels deeply is incapable of welcoming many to the closest union of friendship, it can at least learn from the very sacredness and depth of its emotion the difference between a love of humanity and a love of those whom we are bidden to regard as our neighbour.

But the injunctions of the Catechism are mainly negative in telling us what a friend may never do to a friend, or a neighbour to a neighbour. No hurt, no fraud, no malice, no robbery or deceiving, no defilement, no coveting. These are to be the encircling hedges which define our area of duty towards them. And most certainly this summary of the second table of God's commands serves to emphasise the extreme selfishness of sin. 'Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?'[1] would seem to be written across the stern and plain prohibitions of God's absolute Law. There is a vast amount of broken machinery in the world, which is the result of a selfish indifference to anything but the so-called pleasure of the sinner. Large sums of money are spent in repairs, which might be spent in active progressive work. Large institutions have to be maintained as the hospitals and ambulance which wait on the march of the libertine. Anger,

[1] Acts vii. 26.

fraud, malice, lust, ambition, march through the world destroying as they go, and are the solvents of all neighbourly feeling. There have been descriptions and pictorial representations of a conqueror revisiting the battle-field after his victory. It would be a salutary lesson if the sinner could revisit more frequently the results of his selfishness, and be confronted with the misery which waits upon a single sin.

The results of great and notorious wickedness stand out with a tragic solemnity. There comes a time even to a Nero when his hideous cruelty turns upon him, and dins in his ears the awful cries of vengeance. Goethe has immortalised in his terrible tragedy the wreck and misery which overtake the victim of lust, and the cruelty inflicted by an indulged passion. Those who suffer from trusting dishonest counsellors, those ruined by fraud and wicked greed, seem to cry for retribution to the Eternal Justice. But there are ramifications of sin whose ravages are seldom seen or known; where those who have been injured by its heartless selfishness crawl away like some wounded animal to die out of sight, alone with their pain. There are those young lives whose brightness and joy fade away and die under the cruel neglect of those who promised to love and cherish them. There are children whose hearts are gladdened by no word of love, servants who grind away their strength in the forced drudgery of service extorted by coercion, and unrewarded by just wages. There are young men and women who are lured into the ways of sin by those who from simple devilry implant in their minds the seeds of death. There are those again who are led into the ways of dishonesty, which end too often in ruin, disgrace, and prison, and, worst of all, in a dishonoured conscience. The selfishness of sin, which feeds on the rights of others with a reckless brutality, stamps it at once as unneighbourly as well as ungodly. The broken

machinery of the world and its hampered action is due in most cases to the ravages of selfish sin. So that besides the injury done to God, the sinner is defrauding the world of its rights and man of his just dues, and the field of guilt becomes greatly enlarged, because besides the offence of a sin he has committed a breach of duty.

If a man escapes, then, the guilt of an injury done to his neighbour, if he can truly say, I have hurt nobody in word nor deed; I have been true and just in all my dealings; I have borne no malice nor hatred in my heart; I have kept my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering; I have kept from the ravages of evil lust or the unholy covetousness of an unbridled desire—still, he would not be satisfied with a negative duty such as this: if he loved his neighbour as himself he would never rest contented until he reached out to him helping hands in his distress, and loving counsel in his perplexity; until he had made all the world which came within his reach, as far as lay within his power, capable of attaining to the end for which they were created, and earnest workers towards perfection. How is he, when he steps outside the limits of the family, and the circle of his betters, to whom he had obvious duties, and the charmed precincts of friendship, wherein soul answered to soul—to reach the outer fringe of mankind with whom he comes in contact and be a neighbour to the degraded and outcast, to the despised and uninteresting, and even to those whom he might regard as his enemies?

It was noticed in the earlier days of missionary enterprise that there was a tendency in choosing a sphere of work to plunge into the most remote and savage regions of heathendom, to go as solitary enthusiasts away from all that civilisation had achieved, and in a spirit of chivalrous sacrifice to seek that

which was most distant, most repelling, and most dangerous. Now a wiser policy has directed to work rather from the coast to the inland, from civilisation to savagedom, not with the isolated devotion of individual enterprise, but in the spirit and power of church life, advancing with the organisation, if possible, of the kingdom of God. So if we would reach an outcast and hostile neighbour, we should do well not to study the dictates of a wide and generous enthusiasm, but to work outwards from the near to the far, from the neighbour at home bound to us by certain ties to the neighbour who is removed from us by many barriers, and whom in the end we may be able only to meet perhaps by vicarious energy and the organised help of representatives.

Every well-instructed priest who is entrusted with the care of souls knows that if he means to reach all those who are entrusted to his care, and not to content himself with ministering to a favoured remnant, he must work outwards in ever-widening circles until he reaches the fringe of carelessness, indifference, and sin, which is at first outside the reach of all humanising influence, but which he eventually hopes to touch. He spends himself on his choir, his guilds, his communicants, his church-goers, and so strengthening as he goes reaches the outer rim at last of those who are as much his care as the more favoured worshippers and instructed church-people who gather round him. So if we hope to do our duty to our neighbour we must here too work outwards. There are those, first of all, who look up to us as their betters in the relationship of family life, or as pupils, dependants, servants, or even acquaintances. A wonderful chapter in history might be written about the devotion of servants towards their masters, but a correspondingly dark chapter about the recognition by masters of their duty and responsibility towards servants. The servant

and his rights appear in the fourth commandment; and in the modern desecration of Sunday the suppression of the rights of servants to worship and rest plays a sad and prominent part. Here is one point where our neighbour touches us closely, and where the service of our neighbour may well begin in the recognition of those rights, and in the performance of those duties which the servant may claim from us, not only as our fellowman, but as member of our family, entitled to his share of privileges.

But widening outwards, in seeking to benefit our neighbour, we find ourselves, in the good Providence of God, to be placed by an ecclesiastical arrangement, ancient and almost universal, in what is known as a parish, a district, that is, limited and defined, entrusted to the spiritual care of an especial representative of ecclesiastical authority. Here there is close at hand a means of working through accredited agencies, and with all the help which co-operation bestows, which no earnest man would despise. Every one who thinks seriously will surely feel that he has duties to, and will wish to benefit, the particular parish in which he dwells. So it is, at the present day, that men have become rather congregational than parochial in their relations with the Church. Each one worships in the building which he likes, supports the institution he likes, and follows the guidance of the clergyman whom he likes, and so the parish spirit evaporates, and the parish life dwindles and dies. This is a question about which it would be rash to dogmatise, but it would be well if there were a more generous recognition of obligations due to the particular parish in which a man finds himself to be placed. The wants of the Church are focussed for him in the wants of the parish. Great public questions assume there a concrete form, and offer themselves in a manageable shape. The cause of Education ceases to be merely a polemic of platforms,

when it comes before a man in the practical needs of his parish school. It has been asserted again and again that the religious difficulty, which figures so largely in the debates of Parliament, is virtually non-existent in the schools. And conversely, some of the most ardent exponents of the hardships inflicted by this or that scheme of educational reform are totally unacquainted with the interior of the parish school-room. So once more the wants of the Church take a definite and practical form in the different appeals which come before the members of the parish in the ordinary claims made on their interest and charity.

As in so many other things men are affected by the parish spirit in two opposite directions. Either they allow it to make them narrow and unpatriotic, so that they forget all outside it, such as missions and the needs of other places and such institutions and schemes as are non-parochial, or else they become simply eclectic, support what is near if they like it, neglect it if they do not, and parish life, parish patriotism, and parish enthusiasm faint away and die. Here a man may learn to get rid of his dangerous unneighbourly selfishness, while he studies the general needs and the public good. The ecclesiastical history of the last sixty years has taught us that in no department of life is it so easy to hurt by word and deed, to bear malice and hatred in our heart, to use our tongue for evil-speaking, lying and slandering, as in those regions in which our neighbour figures as a religious opponent. Here a man may learn that conscientious convictions and love of truth are not always necessarily on his side, and that the parish, besides offering him convenient opportunities of exercising an organised benevolence, has much also to teach him as to his own place in reference to his neighbour, and that 'my own' is a formula which has its limitations not only in practical life, but also in the regions of religious truth.

But even where there is the greatest devotion to the parish, and the duties which it imposes, there still remains the great expanse of road from Jerusalem to Jericho, where our neighbour is to be found in the stripped and wounded victims of this world's cruelty. There is the vast heathen world calling out to us: 'Come over and help us.' There are the wants of great cities with their constant tendency to lapse into practical heathenism. There is the open sore of the world, in the white slavery which dogs the footsteps of advancing civilisation and shames it, which needs all that sympathy, work, devotion, and money can do to prevent it encroaching still farther with its deadly fangs. There are the countless schemes of benevolence in which we are invited to help the body, soul and spirit of our poor neighbour. Here, in the first place, is a call to a more systematic arrangement of alms that we may have to give to those that need; and then, further, the recognition that in most cases the need is most effectually met, and our own duty best performed by the employment of those skilled agencies which have made the particular work a study, and which are able to do as our deputies that which we should have done if only we had possessed the requisite education, skill and opportunity.

There is an immense field open to all, which widens out round the word 'neighbour.' A word which adds greater dignity to our fellow-men, and a deeper responsibility to ourselves. 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.'[1] It should tend to make sin more impossible, and selfishness more sinful, if once it were realised that both sins of commission and sins of omission are not only sins against God, but also sins against the true conception of man.

[1] Rom. xiii. 10.

PART IV

PRAYER

Catechist.—My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve Him, without His special grace; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer. Let me hear therefore, if thou canst say the Lord's Prayer.

Answer.—Our Father, Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Question.—What desirest thou of God in this Prayer?

Answer.—I desire my Lord God our heavenly Father, Who is the giver of all goodness, to send His grace unto me, and to all people; that we may worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him, as we ought to do. And I pray unto God, that He will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies; and that He will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins; and that it will please Him to save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily; and that He will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death. And this I trust He will do of His mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore I say, Amen. So be it.

PRAYER

'Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow.'

We too will stand beside that shrine
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God :
And see our old prayers granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

We are all of us more or less Pelagians in our heart of hearts, and quite prepared to enterprise our duty both towards God and towards our neighbour without any except a conventional reference to grace. This spirit has been diligently fostered by the educational schemes of the last quarter of a century; while there is even a lingering belief that piety may be an enemy to manliness, and that devotion should be left to women ; and learned and grave divines will be found who affirm that Confession is damaging to strength of character, and that Confirmation is chiefly useful as an occasion of self-confident protestation that those promises which we have seen to be of such wide-reaching significance shall be faithfully kept, by the resolute and self-contained Christian. The controversies as to religious education which have played so prominent a part in the opening years of the twentieth century indicate, at least in some quarters, a fundamental misconception that religious education consists mainly in the imparting of knowledge on Biblical and moral subjects, rather than in the painful and laborious efforts of teaching a child how to be religious. And it would be a very

serious disaster, and a blow to the religious sense of the nation, if in frantic endeavour to stem an attack, to make a scientific educational frontier, or even secure an equitable money settlement, all national education should become secular, and religious education be thus definitely severed from it, to be taken up with such efficiency as might be commanded, by different denominations who had energy enough to care for it, and by those children whose parents might think it well to give them this extra instruction, taken out of their hours of play or industry, commanding no public recognition of its worth, and perhaps coming to be regarded as a fresh torment imposed by the clergy.

The Catechism, with its emphatic protest 'Thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve Him, without His special grace,' is a recall to us to see that a doctrine of prayer and grace should be inwoven in our system of education, and that what God hath joined together man should not put asunder.

In insisting strongly on the necessity and value of prayer this Christian manual faithfully reflects the practice and precepts of Christ, and the teaching generally of the Church. The importance of prayer, and the stress which has been ever laid upon it, will be evident to all who have mastered the contents of the volume in this series devoted to this subject; and any remarks here offered must be viewed as subsidiary to the principles there set forth, and the investigations there so fully entered into.[1]

I

It is obvious, in the first place, to remark that the Christian child has here put in his hands a form of prayer, in a Catechism which is contained in a book

[1] See *Prayer*, by A. J. Worlledge, and especially chap. viii. on 'The Lord's Prayer.'

which is also full of forms of prayer. And while those other forms have to do with public prayer, where a form is more intelligible, and even necessary, this instruction put before him has to do with private prayers. The child is, in fact, started on his religious course with an exhortation to use a form in his private prayers, and if he remains stedfast to his religious training at all, in the great majority of cases, when he is old he will not depart from it, but continue in mature life to use a form of private prayer, as he was instructed to do, while yet a child.

And yet it would be idle to ignore the challenge which is brought against this system as conducing to formalism, and the danger that undoubtedly exists of a lapse into mechanical devotion and unspiritual prayer. It is a sufficient answer to most objectors to say, that when our Blessed Lord was appealed to for instruction on this point, His answer to 'Lord, teach us to pray' was to enunciate the form of words known as 'the Lord's Prayer,' which is here set forth for every child to commit to memory. And if it be said that 'the Lord's Prayer' was only meant as a model of arrangement, subjects, and conditions of prayer, it would be well to point out that the testimony of Christian tradition is against this interpretation. The Liturgical use of the Lord's Prayer, its jealous guardianship from profanation at the hands of the heathen, its undoubted history, all exhibit it as being cherished not merely as a model of prayer, but as a form of sacred words in itself venerable and efficacious with God.

Cardinal Newman, in his once famous *Parochial and Plain Sermons*,[1] has elaborated the advantages of a form of words in private prayer, showing how such a form is adapted to steady excited feelings, and to educate our aspirations, and to give us right instruc-

[1] Newman, *Sermons*, vol. i. Sermon xx.

tion in the modes of approaching God; while to the grown-up man it may furnish one of those links of piety with the past whereby his advancing life may be connected with, or at least not severed from, a holier and a purer past.

A striking instance of this is given in the life of Mgr. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, where he describes his summons to minister to the last necessity of one of Napoleon's veterans, when the mind of the old man, now become hardened and insensible to all religious sentiments and aspirations, was roused and quickened by the sound of the Lord's Prayer, one petition of which was connected in his mind with a mother's voice and a mother's teaching given in the far-off days of his childhood, and which proved to be the only cord which bound him to religion, as yet unsnapped, a cord of silver wound round his heart by a mother's love, and fastened to the words of the Lord's Prayer.

There is no doubt that the association which gathers round actual forms of words is extremely valuable; and that the meaning of words which are in themselves unaltered alter indefinitely with our varying moods. Holy Scripture, holy prayer, holy words seem to need almost the experience of a lifetime to develop their meaning. They are like the sea, or the mountains, or the rolling expanse of a home landscape; they weep when we weep, and laugh when we laugh in sympathetic friendliness, and speak to our varying moods.

It is not a little significant to notice in this connection the use made by our Blessed Lord, and by the saints, of the Psalms and other passages of Holy Scripture, as if these consecrated words formed the most ready vehicle in which the aspirations and emotions of the heart could best be wafted heavenwards, and teach us the value of words fulfilled with

saintly utterance, and fashioned indeed by the divine lips, which come to us almost as a form of petition ready prepared, for each petitioner to fill up with his own needs, and signed with the all-availing signature of Christ Himself:

> In His own words we Christ adore,
> But Angels as we speak,
> Higher above our meaning soar
> Than we o'er children weak;
> And yet His words mean more than they,
> And yet He owns their praise:
> Why should we think He turns away
> From infant's simple lays?[1]

II

But to use this form of prayer, or indeed any other form aright, we shall need the power of praying: a power in which we require exercise and instruction for its full development; and a power which, as we shall see, suffers from nothing so much as contempt and want of effort.

We have been warned against narrow conceptions of prayer, and have been reminded that 'prayer is nothing else but an ascent of the mind to God.'[2] And indeed it is of supreme importance that we should rectify our judgments from time to time, and steady our conceptions, and firmly lay hold of the absolute greatness of that which is not only a subject of divine precept, but also a matter of divine instruction, and which is farther consecrated by that formula which is expressed or understood in all prayer: 'Through Jesus Christ our Lord.' If prayer represents the consecrated enclosure of our life, these words represent the position of the Altar in the temple. They show us that prayer

[1] Keble, *Christian Year*, Catechism.
[2] Worlledge, *Prayer*, p. 9.

is no dreamy elevation of sentiment into an atmosphere of poetic musing, no childish asking for everything we see, and everything we fancy, no fretful cry from the sick-bed of pain, or moan from the querulousness of disappointment, but rather a solemn union of ourselves with our Blessed Lord's mediatorial work.

He offered Himself in the eternal counsels of God. He took our sins upon His head, He was slain, the victim offered for the sins of the world, and now He has gone within the veil, there to make intercession for us through His blood; and every prayer that is prayed, and every supplication that is offered, must be sprinkled with that atoning blood. Every petition must be capable of being adapted to this its seal and sanctification 'through Jesus Christ.' No petulance or carelessness, no sinfulness or imperfect devotion can stand the weight of that tremendous impress, under which crumbles away all that is unworthy of the dignity and majesty of God, and unfit to be presented before Him in that Name.

The idea of the court of Heaven up to which our petitions pass, and in which they must be presented, might well steady the wayward utterance and the unworthy desire. Here is the place where the destiny of the world is being worked out, the Presence before Whom have passed the great empires of the world. Here is the Council Chamber in which all the business of this active scene is being carried out, and those ordered motions regulated, which from their observed uniformity of action we know as laws of the universe. Here is being organised and equipped the never-ceasing campaign of the Church against the carelessness and disorder of the world; here are being administered with minute care the different lives of men. Here are pouring in the impassioned cries for pardon, the piteous wail of pain, the solemn prayer of the saint, the tender voice of the little child. 'Through Jesus

Christ': this steadies and softens all, this reduces prayer to those dimensions without which, as we are here taught, it cannot pass into 'Heaven.' 'Hallowed be Thy Name': the prayer must subserve this great end. 'Thy kingdom come': it must advance true progress. 'Thy will be done': it must fit into the laws of God's working. And saving these conditions God expects us to pray, and help in the administration of His universe on the principles which underlie prayer. Is then prayer after all a sort of make-believe to make a man credit his own effort with that which really comes from Almighty God, and would be ours without the asking? Is it something like that pleasant fiction with which a strong man will gratify a tiny child by letting him put his hand on the powerful instrument with which he is working at his full strength?

It sounds sensible, and even reverent, to say, that God being omnipotent and all-loving, He cannot need either our petitions or our help. On the same principle we might refuse to dig, or sow, or reap, because we might trust God to give us loaves of bread ready made without our working for them. It sounds a fair challenge, that a Christian should take a ward in a hospital, and if he believes what he says he believes, pray the patients well, because God has promised to hear prayer: we might on the same principle educate, clothe, feed ourselves, do our daily work by prayer, ignoring the fact that God has always chosen, except on very special occasions, to use secondary causes in carrying out His beneficent schemes.

It sounds like a real jealousy for God's honour to say, that our prayer for rain or for fair weather might ruin one portion of the community at the expense of another, did we not remember that we have no warrant for supposing that prayer is like the fatal gift in the fairy story, which must work itself out by a mechanical force, with no restraint of discretion or equity.

It does seem important to remember, that prayer is a great deal more than a recognition of Almighty God, and a concession on His part to our childish love of importance. Prayer, unless Holy Scripture has been misunderstood, and unless our instinct has misled us, would seem to be a necessity for a right participation in God's gifts on the part of man, and a recognised contribution to the working of the world. He who is set to hold a rope, or loosen a wedge, or pour oil or other lubricant may seem to have little or nothing to do with the launching of the huge ship as it glides into the water. And yet if he acted on this feeling, and neglected his part, however humble, he might very easily find that the success of the whole transaction was impeded.

God expects us to pray, that would seem to be certain. Prayer would seem to be as much a contribution to our own welfare and the welfare of the world as ploughing, sowing, and reaping are to the labourer and to agriculture.

That man has to do his part, would seem to be a law stamped on every part of God's dealings with His creatures. He makes us, and we can throw away our position. He redeems us, and we can refuse to be saved. He gives us sacraments, and we may refuse to use them; blessings, and we may refuse to ask for them. The respect paid to the liberty of man by Almighty God makes us almost wonder whether coercive legislation, morality by Act of Parliament, liberality which is enforced, and consideration which is based on coercion, are linked on true principles; although it may well be that legislation may prepare the field in which higher principles may have their proper unrestricted field of action.

In prayer we would seem to have the utmost possible development of the liberty of choice. The riches of God are stored up in the greatest profusion for the

world, the Church, and our own souls, and man is set to regulate their distribution. He must ask for them before they can be dispensed, and his demands will be governed by the intercession and the sanctification of Jesus Christ.

To realise this is to put prayer on its proper basis, it is to understand that which is an instinct of humanity, where fear and superstition have not crushed it out. Men in their loneliness have put up prayers to the sun and moon, and to the creations of their fancy, to give them gifts which they felt might be had, and yet were wanting to them. They felt a longing for something higher, always for something more, something richer and fuller, for which, if necessary, they would sacrifice comfort, and live in a cave; or ease, and live a life of maimed asceticism; or affection, and give up even their children, and all that they held most dear, if only they might gain this mysterious treasure as yet denied to them. The world gropes after God like a starving crowd, which hears that there is some dole to be distributed, some advantage, some benefit, they know not what; and they wait for hours in the cold street, now they surge this way, now that, towards their supposed benefactor, only to curse their disappointment and bewail their folly. And so Prayer, the feeling that we ought to ask, is an instinct of humanity; God educated and trained it all through the days of Judaism, until the Cross at once made it easier and imposed its conditions.

The Altar in Heaven and the Altar on earth both meet in this, they both invite us to pray, and they both assure us that all prayer will be answered which mounts up before God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

III

If this be true we need not wonder at the great stress laid on prayer in the Catechism, and we shall see that 'Lord, teach us to pray' is a request which we still need

to make both for ourselves and for our children. For it is quite possible to set up a counterfeit kind of prayer, and to charge real prayer with all those imperfections, disappointments, and failures which do not really belong to it.

First of all, then, prayer is an exercise which we must never allow ourselves to despise. A careful study of Dr. Liddon's valuable sermon on 'Prayer' will show us how very largely the element of effort and difficulty enters into the Bible estimate of prayer which he there unfolds to us.[1] And yet the popular estimate of its difficulty is very dissimilar. The ordinary man thinks that as all are ordered to pray, prayer must be easy for every one; and so with little or no preparation, with scant effort, and no attempt to shut off distractions, he plunges into the most solemn address which a creature can offer to his Creator, he takes on his lips psalms and devotions wrung from the very heart of men who were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and expects them to win their way in a heart charged with frivolity and worldliness, or even sin. If it is worth praying at all, obviously it is worth while to take trouble in the exercise, otherwise it will degenerate into the most insipid and worthless occupation, of which loss of time is the least evil thing with which it can be charged. There are three faculties, it has been pointed out,[2] which are energetically engaged in any real act of prayer; they are, the understanding, the affections, and the will. And so, accordingly, some effort must be made to secure the active co-operation of each and all of these faculties in our devotions. Before we engage in prayer, before a word has been said or an aspiration formed, our understanding must put us in the presence of God, and make us remember what we really are attempting to do. Here, too, 'He that

[1] Liddon, *Some Elements of Religion*, chap. v.
[2] *Ibidem*, pp. 172, 173.

cometh to God must believe that He is.'[1] There He is the Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Whom no man hath seen nor can see; the great Being before Whose presence mortal men have crouched in fear, before Whose face the angels cover themselves in reverence, abasement and awe. It is He, Who loves us with no divided affection, Who has graven us on the palms of His hands,[2] and has ever before Him the possibilities of our highest welfare. It is He Whose Presence shakes the earth and kindles tongues of fire. It is only too certain that very little stress is laid by the ordinary worshipper on this preparation, which is so necessary to him before he ventures to approach so great a Majesty. Man trips in and out before the Holiness of God, and says words which he does not feel, towards a Person of Whom he has no cognisance or intelligent perception. It is here that the affections should be summoned to aid. After all, it is a child who is approaching his most loving Father; it is a friend who is holding communion with his dearest companion; it is needy man seeking his greatest benefactor, and One Who loves him more than he loves himself, and Who is always more ready to hear than we are to pray. And then the will, firm and stedfast, must be summoned to keep him earnest and steady in purpose and resolute in attitude. And the will, accustomed to restrain the whims and caprices of the various powers which are marshalled under its direction, will know how to seize on every help, and make the most of every auxiliary.

The common foe to earnest prayer is distraction, caused by wandering thoughts and divided attention. Other thoughts come in and snatch the thought of God away. The smoke of our sacrifice has scarcely begun to rise when the eddying winds of distraction catch it and whirl it hither and thither, so that it seems to be

[1] Heb. xi. 6. [2] Is. xlix. 16.

incapable of rising stedfastly towards Heaven. In a pane of mediæval glass, preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, there is a representation of divine worship, in which every worshipper has at his elbow some demon of distraction, energetically engaged in dissipating holy thoughts, and drawing them away from their proper object by holding up before his eyes here his money-bags, there some object of interest, there some news of the day, or some message of fear. It is a faithful parable of what goes on within the experience of most devout Christians. With many a man, to pray seems only to be the opening of the door of imagination to every sort of intruder, while it floods the mind with every kind of fancy, which course each other with startling rapidity and marvellous power of transformation across the mind. It is easy, of course, to acquiesce in this, to say that it is after all human nature, and that we cannot help it. But, be it observed, a man does not so lightly acquiesce in a distraction which makes him useless as an accountant, or which invalidates his power of investigation, more especially where the prizes of the world depend on his steadiness, and on the concentration which he is able to exercise towards any given point. And it becomes evident that there ought not to be a readiness to acquiesce too easily in so serious a spiritual defect, and which is so deeply charged with danger to the soul.

An honest introspection will show that a great deal of this distraction is self-caused. It may be that habits of discipline have never been formed, and the mind, which has gone its own way outside the control of the will, is not to be brought into subjection simply because we desire its compliance for one particular object. The want of concentration, the restlessness, the slip-shod smattering of the day, which lead us to attempt to do a hundred things badly rather than one thing well, dog the footsteps which ascend the mount of

prayer, and mercilessly punish with a painful distraction the mind which intellectually and morally has cast off discipline.

How many, again, ignore all preparation for prayer, and nearly all the helps which are provided for them. From the earliest days we read of places where men 'stood before the Lord.'[1] 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet,' said God to Moses, 'for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.'[2] 'Thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about. Lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze.'[3] 'Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God,'[4] says the wise preacher. And when our Blessed Lord Himself is giving His directions about prayer, in His Sermon on the Mount, He bids His hearers as a preliminary to enter into their closet and shut the door,[5] concentrate, that is, themselves, withdraw from observation, which not only ministers to pride but to distraction, and pray to their Father which is in secret.

There is a graveyard or an enclosure of some kind around most churches which separates them off from the roadway of everyday life, and so around prayer there should be set the neutral ground which represents the hush and seclusion of preparation, the strip of quiet between us and the world of business and pleasure, with its distractions and annoyance.

No doubt it would be a thing to aim at to try and realise the apostolic precept, 'pray without ceasing,'[6] in the sense that prayer should be the normal attitude of our mind from which we descend to do the works, and speak the words, and think the thoughts which the business of life requires, and then fly back again to that from which we were perforce diverted by the claims of duty. This may be a condition to be aimed at, but we are very far from it as yet, and certainly

[1] Gen. xix. 27. [2] Exod. iii. 5. [3] Exod. xix. 12, 21.
[4] Eccles. v. 1. [5] S. Matt. vi. 6. [6] 1 Thess. v. 17.

to rush into devotion without a moment's pause, straight from our letters, our conversation, or our work, is to court failure. Old-fashioned people still retain the habit of silence and quiet as they pass through the churchyard into the church, they still retain the custom of an act of recollection before beginning divine worship: it would be well if the same habit held good in all acts of prayer, whether private or public; as we prepare to seek the throne of grace, and remember that God is in Heaven and we upon earth, therefore our words should be few.[1]

We must remember, further, that the office of the will does not cease here. The concentration which was necessary before beginning prayer, will be necessary in the form of attention during the prayer itself.

To some the chief difficulty occurs in adapting the mind to the stately forms of public prayer; to another, the difficulty comes in using forms at all, whether in public or in private. We have already partially discussed the question of the use of forms in prayer, and the testimony of tradition and the long custom of the Church are in favour of their retention in public, and seem to indicate that we must school ourselves to their right and proper use; but there is no reason why at times, or indeed always, the prayers used in private should not take the form of expressions which the heart knows how to frame at the moment, and which seem to offer a freer vent to the inmost desire than the expressions and forms of another, however devout. It would be well, however, to be on the watch against those dangers which lie, indeed, in the opposite direction to formalism, but are no less real and prejudicial to true devotion.

As regards, however, the difficulty in using forms of prayer without distraction, it may well be questioned whether there is anything like sufficient attention

[1] Eccles. v. 2.

bestowed on that which has been spoken of here and elsewhere, namely the extreme difficulty of prayer. Let us compare the ordinary aspect of an examination-room, in which men are working for some post which is open to competition, on which their honour and welfare depend, with that of a congregation engaged in worship in church. In the one we are struck with the extreme concentration on the work before them, no distraction is permitted, the whole being seems gathered up in painful tension to wrestle with certain problems which will only give up their solution to the most absolute and complete determination. Eyes and ears and hand and brain are all held in complete subservience to the one master purpose of conquering a difficult task in the highest and best way.

Take, on the other hand, the congregation who are supposed to be engaged in the far more difficult task of worshipping God. Obviously with the great majority there is little effort and no struggle, eyes and ears are open to any sights or sounds which may affect them. The one set of men were resolute in achieving a difficult task, the other are languidly engaged in pretending to enter on an exercise in which apparently they have little interest, on which nothing seems to depend and towards which they make but a slight contribution of earnestness. Distraction in prayer is a sad scourge, but it is more: it will produce, if not mastered, a dislike to, and a discontinuance of devotion itself. The congregation, such as we have imagined above, is preparing itself for a discontinuance of divine worship in the near future. If we do not love prayer we shall end in disliking it. It is an exercise which almost more than any other revenges itself on the idle and indifferent. And therefore the banishment of distraction is necessary in the interests of prayer itself as well as of the comfort of the worshipper.

It will be found to depend largely on little things

whether or not our prayers are distracted and rendered lifeless. Such a thing as the custody of the eyes, or the following of the words in the book, or the reading of the lessons in the Bible, or the attitude of the body, will be found to assume an importance quite out of proportion to their apparent littleness. While a wise man will know that he must not rest in these things which are largely negative as against this world, he will press on until he brings himself within the attraction of heavenly things. It is carrying out in another sphere the old principles of detachment and attachment. It will be found that by pushing up these paths of prayer, he finds himself reaching those regions where the voice of the Lord God is heard speaking in clear accents to his soul. He will find treasures lying at the roots of familiar words which he had often passed by unnoticed. He will find the Psalms leading him up by paths which seem endless in their possibility of approach nearer and nearer to the presence of God. He will find that, as in the conflict with sin, so in the struggle with disabling distraction, delight in the service of God is the best remedy against the vain intrusion of unhallowed thoughts. The headings of the collects, the first words of the Psalms, the structure of the service, the ritual directions may all form points of departure into that region where lie in such profusion those jewels which cannot be seen elsewhere. Until distraction becomes a hateful intruder, instead of a welcomed companion; until the danger becomes rather lest we should distract business with devotion than devotion with business, and forget to apply to our work that principle which has helped us to enrich our devotion: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.'[1]

If prayer needs earnestness and trouble, it also needs time. A vigorous effort was made by the Tractarian

[1] Eccles. ix. 10.

leaders, which was crowned with much success, to secure for God a greater recognition in the dedication of more time to His honour, in the daily services of the Church.

It would seem that some reaction is already beginning in the interests of the world. The speed of modern life seems to render men incapable of spending much time on any one serious thing. The length of services in Church is made a subject of frequent complaint, and the ordinary services on a week-day have been permissively shortened, with a result which seems to show that while their shortening has alienated those who loved them in their integrity, that which it was sought to accomplish was their abolishing rather than their shortening. It would be well to consider whether the time devoted to divine service be not a thing to be carefully considered, as well as the earnestness and concentration which we bring to bear on its performance. If prayer be an integral part of our Blessed Lord's mediatorial work, if again it is part of the work which He has entrusted to us for our co-operation, then neither on Sunday nor on week-day can we afford to neglect it. The sevenfold hours of prayer were altered, condensed, and amalgamated into two, partly for the benefit of the laity: but still the proportion of the laity who avail themselves of the opportunity is small. It seems to be altogether impossible to get ordinary men to believe not merely that prayer is a work, but that it is anything else but a waste of valuable time, which might be otherwise better spent for the advantage of the community. To many people their daily private prayers have become a form, which twice a day, morning and evening, or even less, they deduct as a tax on time enforced by propriety; while family prayer again becomes an economical institution adapted to keep the household in regular habits, and Sunday itself, which is the Lord's own day, degenerates into a bad imitation of the Continental Sunday without its

religious exercises; and half an hour devoted to the Lord satisfies an idea of obligation which has taken the place of the joy of service. The institution of the Sabbath, as we have seen, was deep-seated in the heart of those regulations which God gave to man, and one of its underlying principles is the necessity for the consecration of time. If prayer needs earnestness, we may feel equally certain that it lays a claim upon time. Long services and prolonged devotions are not in themselves the mistakes and the burdens which we are sometimes tempted to think them. We are they who need strengthening, not the service which needs weakening. It is our devotion which needs increasing, not the service which needs shortening.

But the greatest barrier to fervent prayer must needs be sin. 'Prayer and sin cannot exist together.' This is a comfort to the sinner who wishes to forsake his sin; it is a perpetual protest to the careless soul, who thinks that he can pray and sin together, and approach God out of an impure heart, with lips whose utterance is stifled by the clamour of a guilty secret within. In old days we read of the prophet who, when his servant stood before him, straight from his deceit, his covetousness and treachery, said to him, 'Whence comest thou, Gehazi?'[1] God may Himself address a similar question, and search Jerusalem with candles,[2] as He sees us coming hastily and lightly into His presence, putting on the vestment of worship over a rough and dishevelled life.

'Whence' is a word which echoes back into the far-off corridors of life, to the time when the Church gave us back regenerate into our mother's arms at the Font, pledged to maintain the quarrel of God against the devil, the world, and the flesh, to times when the conflict waxed fiercer, and the resistance grew fainter, when the vows of Confirmation seemed to have been

[1] 2 Kings v. 25. [2] Zeph. i. 12.

made only to be broken, and formalism set in with its numbing frost, nipping off all the bloom of resolution, and destroying all hopes of good fruit. It is only too possible to take the solemn words of prayer and praise on our lips from which the life has emptied all their meaning. Here is one praying not to be led into temptation, who is trying in every way to discover fresh incitements to sin, and who would be displeased beyond measure if, in answer to his prayer, the ordinary means of temptation were closed to him as he left the Church. Here is another who has been saturating his mind with records of foul sin, for whom fiction only exists as an incitement to his passions, and he prays, 'Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit.' Here is a man praying 'deliver us from evil' who is conscious to himself of not one single effort to subdue the evil which is within him; who habitually despises and neglects all the helps which God has provided against sin, and has again and again done despite to the Spirit of Grace; who says 'Our Father' with the heart of a fatalist, and 'hallowed be Thy Name' from a conversation that dishonours it, 'Thy kingdom come' from a life that knows no wider horizon than the limits of business or society, 'Thy Will be done' with a heart full of covetousness, 'in earth as it is in Heaven' with a complete ignorance of, and indifference to, the things of God. To him 'Give us this day our daily bread' is at the most recognised by a grudging grace followed by a grumble. 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,' is a mere figure of speech, accompanied by the frequent assertion, that he for his part is one of those who if he forgives never forgets.

And so prayer goes up emptied of its meaning by sin, until it becomes a distasteful mockery, and almost a

curse. And thus sin hinders the onward march, spoils the victory, and robs the man of his fruit of conquest, as, like the Babylonish garment and wedge of gold to Achan, a hidden sin becomes a stumbling-block to advance, and turns the things that should have been to our wealth into an occasion of falling, so that the very prayers and praises which cheered our innocence become the solemn dirges which bemoan our guilt.

The frequent Absolutions of the Prayer Book, as also those in the offices of the Breviary and Missal, from which they were adapted, bear witness to the need of a heart free from sin in those who approach the Sanctuary. Those sprinklings of pardon seem to be so adapted 'that those things may please Him which we do at this present'; and to provide for purity in the worshippers. And so where there is everything to indicate the extreme importance of freedom from sin in those who draw near, it would be folly indeed to approach without the full assurance of faith, and the cleansing which God has always demanded from them that draw near to His awful throne.

The prominent place assigned to the Lord's Prayer in the Catechism is but a symbol of the honour which has always been paid to it in the devotions of the Church. It is honoured in itself as the form which the Lord taught us: it is honoured as the pattern of all prayer. And every Christian must see to it that prayer has its due and rightful place in his life.

It is not without significance that the Church has taken over from the ancient world the name of Liturgy as applied to the highest service of the Altar, Liturgy being the public work performed by a few for the good of the many. Here was the tax put upon the wealthy citizen for the benefit of the community, and in like manner it is a tax put upon the Christian now to plead the Great Sacrifice of Calvary for the good of the world.

A man who never prays, who never joins the Eucharistic pleading of the Church, is not only depriving himself of strength and blessing, he is defrauding the Church and the world besides. He is a dumb note in the harmony of creation, he is failing to fulfil an office which God sent him into the world to discharge. 'All things are ours by prayer,' but the mute lips and the cold heart draw down no blessing on the world around them. There is no contact and no union with the intercession of the ascended Lord, and so no response.

> More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of. . . .
> For what are men better than sheep or goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
> Both for themselves and those who call them friends?

PART V

THE SACRAMENTS

Question. How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in His Church?

Answer. Two only, as generally necessary to salvation: that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Question. What meanest thou by this word *Sacrament*?

Answer. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

Question. How many parts are there in a Sacrament?

Answer. Two; the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.

Question. What is the outward visible sign or form in Baptism?

Answer. Water: wherein the person is baptized, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Question. What is the inward and spiritual grace?

Answer. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.

Question. What is required of persons to be baptized?

Answer. Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God, made to them in that Sacrament.

Question. Why then are Infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?

Answer. Because they promise them both by their sureties: which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

Question. Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained?

Answer. For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

Question. What is the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper?

Answer. Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.

Question. What is the inward part, or thing signified?

Answer. The Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

Question. What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby?

Answer. The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine.

Question. What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?

Answer. To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death; and be in charity with all men.

CHAPTER I

THE SACRAMENTS

Tranquil times have little history, but yet they are the times of growth and maturing life.

I do not doubt that your Communions profit you, they do more—they save you.

THE sources from which our Blessed Lord drew His parables are eminently suggestive to us of a hidden world which lies within the phenomenal world and which it is the privilege of the few to penetrate. It was He Who was never tired of pointing out how

This our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

The sower sowing the seed, the tares growing in a wheat field, a woman preparing her bread for the oven, even the prosaic details of a law-court were exhibited as God's messages written in the Heavenly cipher, of which only a few had the key. The Parables were not spoken to make truth more intelligible, but to convey it to the heart which was ready to receive the message couched in these terms.

And so we find that the world has more than one cipher in which to speak to the heart. Sound carries the musician into a region where he hears mysteries which are hidden from those who have not learned the melodious key which unlocks them; or the painter

communes with an ideal where the ordinary man is only conscious of the commonplace. The world around us speaks in this mystic language through the imagination to the mind; and the result is edification, a lifting up of the whole being into a richer and fuller state.

But God has shown us that there is a higher medium of communication still, which uses the instrument of faith, that power by which we realise the unseen, and which speaks to the spirit, the higher side of the incorporeal nature of man, to produce that which is greater even than edification, namely grace, in a direct action of God upon the soul, through external means.

And not only has God shown us the existence of this communication between Himself and the spirit of man through the agency of faith, but He has more than once willed to use it in remarkable ways; and even more than this, He has made this means of dealing with man a matter of obligation, so that on certain occasions the way to God has been barred except through these outward symbols at once significant and effectual. God had not abdicated His throne of mercy when Israel was bitten by the serpents in the wilderness. He was still not far from any one of the sufferers, but He willed that He should be approached, and that healing should be conveyed by the eye of faith making its appeal to the spirit by means of a brazen serpent.

God was still the God of healing, ready and willing to accept out of Syria as out of every nation any who feared Him and worked righteousness; but Naaman the leper found the way of restoration barred except through the actual contact with the waters of Jordan. His rage and disappointment were typical of the feeling which still turns in sullen disapproval from the message which the irresponsive spirit is unable to receive.

So it is that the Catechism, after exhibiting the powerlessness of human nature in itself either to will or to do such things as are pleasing to God, and after insisting

on the efficacy and importance of prayer, finds it necessary to put before the Christian child the scheme of the Sacraments. It would be impossible to do otherwise, were it a question only of God's habitual dealings with men through outward means which are charged with inward grace; but such instruction becomes doubly necessary when we remember that, as with the Israelites and with Naaman so with the Christian child, particular grace is attached to particular means, in an exclusive and absolute way, so that it is not an exaggeration to affirm that two Sacraments or outward means of grace are necessary to salvation, generally, that is for all, and where they may be had; or, in other words, that life is not to be secured in any other way except as the free bounty of Him Who is not tied to Sacraments, nor works in merely mechanical ways, but where man is most bound by His laws, sets in motion the effect of higher laws, and saves by His divine prerogative.

It is not for us to question the why and wherefore of the use of means: God has so willed it, and that is sufficient. At the same time we are allowed to see that there is some reason in this method of working which it is not outside our powers of comprehension to understand. There would seem to be two underlying principles which govern this Sacramental action. The one of them is alluded to in the Catechism under the word 'pledge': 'Lord, show me a sign.' 'How shall I know Thee?' 'How shall we know that the Lord hath spoken?' Sayings of this sort appear again and again in Holy Scripture, indicating the greatness of the barrier which separates the working of God's wisdom from the understanding of men. Man seems to be seized with sudden panics, with inroads of incapacity to believe. He is like a frightened child, who tired and disappointed begins to doubt the power and even the sincerity of the leader in whose guidance he has hitherto reposed. We

seem unable to deal for any length of time in the abstractions of faith, we need an assurance, an earnest, a security by which we may be enabled to feel the certainty of the supernatural gift promised and bestowed upon us. So some have thought that the destruction of the Gadarene swine was 'necessary for the permanent healing of the man' (*i.e.* the demoniac), that he should have an outward evidence and testimony that the hellish powers which held him in bondage had quitted their hold. He wanted his deliverance sealed and realised to him in the open destruction of his enemies; not else would he have been persuaded of the truth of that deliverance, and that Christ had indeed and for ever set him free; as the children of Israel coming out of Egypt must *see* the dead bodies of their oppressors on the shore, ere they could believe that these never again should bring them into their old bondage.[1] And so God in the Sacramental system has mercifully given to man a system of pledges, that he may be assured of the reality of a transaction which takes place in the region of spirit by outward visible signs which are part and parcel of his everyday life, at once suggestive by an appropriate symbolism, and conveying the reality of that which they signify. Perhaps the human craving for a pledge is most manifest in the case of a sinner, who while he does not for one moment doubt the power and willingness of God to pardon, yet craves for and is satisfied with the actual message of forgiveness pronounced by human lips, where God uses the instrumentality of human language as a pledge of His perfect remission of sins to the contrite sinner who confesses them.

The other principle alluded to above would seem to repose on an opposite need of human nature, the need for testing and bracing the power of faith on which so much of his spiritual life and efficiency depends. 'My

[1] Trench, *Notes on the Miracles of our Lord*, pp. 173, 174.

father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean'?[1] seems to be the formula which exactly expresses the state of mind to be dealt with by Sacraments. The demands of faith, which must be and which are very great, are to be prepared for by the willingness exacted from the believer to do some little thing on his part to obtain a great thing on the part of God. Faith is the necessary medium between man and God, Who makes the acceptance of the will, working freely, a condition of the bestowal of His benefits. God will never pauperise by the dower of blessings to which man has contributed nothing. 'By faith ye are saved,' but faith means a real effort on the part of man, a real contribution to the working out of his own salvation with fear and trembling.

II

Two of these sacraments, at once 'pledges' which confirm faith, and 'means' which test it by their simplicity, are here put before the child, explained and emphasised in a very solemn manner. It will not be necessary to enter into a discussion in this place as to the exact number of Sacraments. It has been pointed out in a recent series of learned lectures, that there is no fixed number which can claim any Catholic authority for their limitation. The grouping together into seven with which we are so familiar is not earlier than the twelfth century, and rests on the authority of Peter Lombard, spreading gradually to the East, and adopted there apparently not earlier than the thirteenth century, and even then in many cases with a difference as to the Sacraments so included.[2] Obviously, unless there is

[1] 2 Kings v. 13.

[2] Fr. Puller on the 'Unction of the Sick,' the *Guardian*, Jan. 28, 1903.

some authoritative decision on the subject, the number of Sacraments, that is, means of grace, will vary according to the strictness or looseness of the definition employed. In the Catechism the definition is an exceedingly close one, and so the Sacraments there referred to are reduced to two, as ordinances 'generally necessary to salvation,' of which the sign was 'ordained by Christ Himself,' 'that is in His own Person, and not through His apostles or their successors; or, as it is expressed in Article xxv., 'ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel.'[1] And so it is asserted in the Homilies that Matrimony and Confirmation are Sacraments, but not in such significance as Baptism and Holy Communion. Here, the definition being looser, the number of Sacraments is larger; in the Catechism and in the Articles the definition is stricter, and so the number of Sacraments in the restricted sense is smaller; although in Article xxv. we find the distinction drawn with sufficient plainness between those 'commonly called Sacraments' and 'Sacraments of the Gospel,' the *differentia* being the 'visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.'[2]

Nothing can be stricter, however, than the insistence which is laid on these two, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, as being 'generally necessary to salvation,' that is to say, necessary for all, and where they can be had, and not merely counsels of perfections for the few, or incident to certain states of life.

That anything should be seriously viewed as necessary to salvation is a doctrine abhorrent to present-day principles. Monitory clauses are being removed from the social code, from the Bible, and from the Creed. It is thought a piece of savage brutality even to allude to Hell, and an illiberal impertinence to warn, while to say that a man is held responsible to God for what 'views' he adopts as regards the Sacraments, or that any doctrine

[1] Robinson, *The Church Catechism Explained*, p. 139.
[2] Art. xxv.

peculiar to any one denomination should be regarded as essential, is looked upon as the very embodiment of sectarian bigotry. But here these words remain, and it is worth while inquiring what they mean. In the first place it is extremely desirable to rid our minds of the strange notions that sentences of warning, and an emphatic assertion of certain revealed truths, are intolerant and cruel. No one can read only the New Testament without being struck with the predominant tone of warning which pervades its pages from end to end. If we try to realise only the Gospel scheme and what it means; if we try to penetrate the depth of meaning which underlies the word 'Saviour,' or the confident assertion again and again repeated that a man is responsible for what he thinks as well as for what he does; there is much to make us pause. But even more, no one can read the Holy Scriptures without discovering another train of solemn admonition, and that is as to the danger which accompanies a familiarity with Holy things and the peril which waits on privilege. It meets us in the Old Testament, and more strikingly still in the New Testament, as for instance in the awful and mysterious threatenings which surround the sin of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and the frequent and reiterated denunciation of those who, living in the full privilege and opportunity of welcoming Christ, yet to their own unutterable condemnation rejected Him. We read in the pages of the Old Testament of the king who cut out with his penknife and burned the obnoxious leaves which contained for him the message of God's wrath,[1] and yet that did not alter the sentence pronounced against him.

We want more monitory clauses, not less, in every direction. One of the most serious symptoms of the age is the absence of holy fear. The spirit of the age which says, 'Do as you like,' 'Think as you like,'

[1] Jer. xxxvi. 20.

'Believe as you like,' 'Criticise as you like,' may well chafe at such words as 'necessary to salvation.' A hardihood of irreverence such as that which dominates the prevailing thought of the day will question the authority on which such words rest, or deny the church's right to make such an inference. Still they do not stand alone; and if we believe in revelation at all, it is not for us to say, I will accept such revelation, in so far and no farther, as it commends itself to my understanding.

It has been well said: 'The supposition of religious rationalism is that doctrines should justify themselves to us, and fit into our thoughts harmoniously; that until they do so . . . we cannot really be said to believe them or take them home, or to have an insight into them. Faith would not lie, therefore, in the submission of the reason to belief in external realities only partially disclosed and imperfectly apprehended, but in the readiness of his mind to enter into intelligent agreement with what is revealed. . . . The words and ordinances in which those divine truths were couched might not be tampered with, just for the very reason that they did not, and could not, correspond exactly to the reality which they half hid and half disclosed,' hence 'no man might trust himself to depart from the form of words and the ordinances under which it comes to us, through which it is revealed to us, and apart from which revelation does not exist, there being nothing else given to us by which to ascertain or enter into it. It is this last point which is so strangely ignored by the rationalising Christian, who sits in judgment on the adequacy of the ideas and expressions in which divine truth has been wrapt, as though he had some direct insight into supernatural realities apart from revelation, and could compare the two forms of knowledge one with another.'[1]

[1] Tyrrell, *The Faith of the Millions*, pp. 93, 95, 96.

And yet it is worth while to inquire what is meant by such a phrase as 'necessary to salvation.' Surely not that participation in the Sacraments is required by a Spiritual Test Act, as a condition of entering Heaven; but that human nature being what it is, and God being what He is, and the scheme of salvation being what it is, the necessary freedom from sin and the necessary infusion of grace, both of them prerequisites to eternal salvation, can only be attained by a devout participation in that Sacramental means which Christ, when He took upon Him to deliver man, devised for the perfecting and salvation of those whom He redeemed by His precious blood, and would save by progressive sanctification.

III

It is necessary now to glance at these two Sacraments which are treated of with a dogmatic precision such as cannot be surpassed in the other formularies of the Anglican Church: and inasmuch as both of them form the subject of separate volumes in this Library, it will be well to confine ourselves to certain practical aspects of these means of grace as bearing on the Christian life, as is suggested indeed in the questions and answers in the Catechism which describe in each case the blessings conferred on the devout receiver.

Holy Baptism has for the most part ceased to be regarded by the ordinary man as having any present bearing on his daily life. If he thinks of it at all it is as being connected in his mind with past controversy and with the doctrine of regeneration, with the inner significance of which he has no sympathy, for indeed he does not understand what it means. Baptism represents to him a concession to a theological propriety which his parents submitted to in his case, something

past and gone, an initiatory rite, perhaps a symbolical ceremony which he may look back to in imagination in his better moments, and which he may use as a certificate of authority and a passport to those few remaining posts which are confined exclusively to churchmen.

The hurry of modern life, the impatience of anything which might delay divine service for a few minutes, has led to the removal of the celebration of Holy Baptism from the place which it was designed to occupy in the public services of the Church. This Sacrament is administered, almost privately, at a time when few adult members of the congregation are present, and the result is that many grow up to manhood without ever having witnessed a Baptism, and without hearing the words of great solemnity there employed, or understanding the important position which it claims to occupy in the Christian life.

And yet an ordinary reader of the Bible cannot fail to be struck by the extreme significance therein attached to this Sacrament. S. Paul, for instance, in a well-known passage says, that the Christian is by Baptism introduced to a life of which the motto may be said to be 'dead unto sin.' The baptized man is, if he answers to God's purpose, as insensible to sin as a dead man to the objects which he encounters in this world of sense. 'Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.'[1]

And when men began to think seriously about the Church and her teaching here in England, now about seventy years ago, they insisted, and that rightly, on setting forth in the very forefront of their teaching the extreme significance and utter importance of Holy Baptism. In season and out of season this was the topic of sermons, the subject of discussion, the object

[1] Rom. vi. 4.

of controversy—new birth in Holy Baptism. The apparent denial, or what is even more fatal, the permissive denial of this fundamental Bible truth, was the first of those Pyrrhine victories won by lax public opinion over the growing and prevailing belief of Church people in their own rights and privileges as set forth in the Prayer Book. To-day, either because the battle has shifted, or from indifference and misconception, we hear little about Holy Baptism. The idea that this Sacrament has any present spiritual bearing on their life, unless it be that certain promises conducive to a good life were there made in their name, many would ridicule as fantastic, at least as poetical, possibly even superstitious. But there is an obstinate persistency in the Bible and in the unbroken tradition of the Church in the opposite direction.

Holy Baptism, so far from being a piece of fanciful symbolism, which may be cast away by a majority of ratepayers into a lumber-room of denominational fanaticisms, or which might certainly be abolished in favour of some new form of initiation into Church membership, is treated in the Bible as fundamental, as one of the main exhibitions of the permanent victory over sin won by Christ in His resurrection. S. Paul, in the passage quoted above, speaks of the impossibility of living in sin for his converts, because at a specific moment 'they died to it'; or, as he goes on to say, 'did you not realise that this was the effect of Baptism? Did you not know, that then you were immersed into Christ —into His death—that is, that you were introduced by Baptism into a state of conformity with, participation of, His death? When you entered into the water you died, when you passed under it you were buried, when you emerged you rose again, in the symbolical acceptance of all these necessary processes wherein Christ threw off the body of our death and rose to newness of life.' Christ's resurrection, in all the import-

ance of that cardinal doctrine of the Faith, is bound up with the Sacrament of Baptism. At the Font every Christian, not symbolically only, but really, is made partaker of that great triumph, and empowered to walk in newness of living, with a fresh capacity, that is, of life. And this is no isolated nor rhetorical utterance. In precept and in practice we find the same thought throughout the New Testament. There are our Lord's own words of commission so startling and so stern: 'Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'[1]

We have S. Paul's words once more: 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.'[2] Or there is the equally strong statement of S. Peter: 'The like figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.'[3] And Apostolic practice is even more emphatic than Apostolic precept. It has been asserted with some hardihood that conversion and not Baptism is the necessity for a new life. And yet Saul of Tarsus was, if any one, converted by the direct interposition of God. The blinding flash and the overwhelming voice met that proud and vigorous nature running away in headstrong impetuosity into vain and useless channels, and wrenched the dialectical disputant into the burning Apostle of the Crucified; but to him, penitent, crushed, and indeed converted, Ananias was sent with the water which brings new birth, and with

[1] S. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. R.V. [2] Titus iii. 5.
[3] 1 S. Peter iii. 21; cf. also S. John iii. 5.

the grace which immersed the sinful soul into Christ, into active participation with His death, burial, and resurrection.[1] And so afterwards, when the same Apostle was asked by the trembling gaoler at Philippi, 'What must I do to be saved?' he answered speedily and certainly, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'[2] But the expression of that belief on the part of the gaoler was the immediate acceptance of that which the Lord Jesus commanded, in the Baptism of himself and all his house.

So that with our eyes on Holy Scripture we acquit the Catechism of an unbalanced dogmatism when it puts into the mouths of the children this strong and uncompromising statement, that Baptism as well as Holy Communion is one of those Sacraments 'generally necessary to salvation.'

But the more immediate object of this present chapter is to exhibit Holy Baptism as a permanent factor in our everyday spiritual life, and not a remote action in a vanished past.

We cannot think of this Sacrament, as was suggested above, as an arbitrary thing imposed by God on mankind under pains and penalties, to be accepted without any clear idea of its value, to be rejected on pain of eternal damnation. It is this method of viewing the decrees of Almighty God which lead men to attempt to apologise for their supposed abruptness, and to attempt to save the reputation of His love by arbitrary interference with His warnings. But, once more, God Almighty, if we may say so with reverence, does not propound certain abstract propositions which are to be assented to under pain of a tremendous penalty, but He does order us to carry out certain principles of faith and practice as our only safeguard amidst conditions which belong to an unhealthy and dangerous world. The obligation of

[1] Acts ix. 17. [2] Acts xvi. 30, 31.

Holy Baptism is rooted in the very nature of man, and is an outcome of his pitiful weakness. All schemes for the amelioration of mankind, all Utopias and Republics and Commonwealths, have been wrecked again and again on this rock, the innate corruption of man, which has earned for him the distinction of being a very prince in depravity. This predisposition to vice is known to theologians under the title of original or birth-sin, and is recognised by those who shrink from theological terms and have no concern about sin, as hereditary taint, sometimes more, sometimes less, but always existing to this extent that, whereas it is possible for any living thing to stay as it is or to get better or to get worse, man, if left to himself, has an inevitable tendency to deterioration.

It was with this doctrine of birth-sin belonging to the children of Adam, and of farther hereditary taint descending from parents, that Christ had first to deal, if we may say so with reverence, in delivering man from the bondage of moral death.[1]

Man must needs be made capable of the higher goodness, and therefore 'Ye must be born again' is the first and most obligatory command which meets the Christian entering on his life here on earth. And so Baptism, or the new birth, is lifted out of any arbitrary or artificial position which it might have been supposed to hold, and takes its place, as being as necessary to the spiritual life as natural birth is to the natural life. To those who will accept Christ's gift with the hand of faith, Holy Baptism, not as a charm acting independently of the man, but co-operating with his faith, will give him that nature which will enable him to produce in his poor and crumbling humanity that image of Christ which would have been impossible without it; we must always carefully remember that Holy Baptism is not connected with

[1] See also the Author's *Religion*, chap. iii.

an historical date in our individual past to be regarded as a name-day, a promise-day, or a day of new-birth according to the theological propensity of the individual thinker, but is rather to be regarded as a living force within the man now. He 'died to sin once,' that is true in the dim past before the full dawn of his consciousness; but when he had been buried with Christ by Baptism into death he emerged into newness of living. The life which we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, of Whom every one may say: 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.'

But the question is even more pressing than this. There are few subjects of such vital importance as the precise bearing of what we call nature on our conduct. Is nature a weight tied round our neck to render futile from the very first the frantic plungings which we mistake for the efforts of freedom to escape drowning? Is nature, on the other hand, a carefully adjusted life-buoy, so that, without any effort or struggle on our part, we can trust it to sustain us amidst the breaking waves of this troublesome world? Has Baptism anything to say to these difficulties, or is nature an obstinate fact which laughs at the niceties of theological speculations?

There can be no doubt as to transmitted qualities which came to us from our ancestors; a look, a gesture, an attitude, the formation of handwriting, the intonation of language, quite unconsciously to ourselves, will reproduce some distinctive characteristic of father or mother, or even some remoter ancestor who only remains to us in a portrait, or an historical record. But are moral qualities transmitted also? Is the son of a drunkard necessarily a drunkard too? Is the son of a murderer started on his course with irresistible tendencies to homicide? Can the child of the saintly father or mother trust to the long-measured swell of a wave of goodness to carry

him on safely without an effort on his part? If so, there is obviously no room for free-will or moral responsibility. No careful steering or good seamanship will save the boat which starts forth with a gaping rent in its side, through which more and more the water is bound to enter with inevitable and irresistible inroads. An unalterable heredity is only fate under another name, and moralists and social-improvers and clergy must cease their futile labours and turn their attention to ridding the world gradually of diseased and deadly stocks rather than playing with forces which will always be too strong for them.

Heredity will always be an interesting subject to thinking men, but those who have the most right to speak are bidding us not to be too hasty, nor to conclude on an imperfect induction of facts. Let it be remembered that we inherit a great deal more than the immediate characteristics of our father and mother; that behind them reach back a long series of traits, the effects of which have probably passed into our nature. The son of a drunken father may be impressed by that of which he has some sort of cognisance; he may be conscious of this tendency as one of overwhelming preponderance. But there are other tendencies at work within him, straining at his inclinations, and clamouring to be heard. It is his, in the last resort, to choose and to affirm by means of his will, which he will follow and by which he will be guided.

It may sometimes be seen in a large family, the members of which have all presumably received the same hereditary tendencies, how these are dealt with variously by different members of that family accordingly as the will in each has determined. Here, for instance, are the children of a spendthrift who presumably have inherited a tendency to extravagance. One has given rein to his inclinations, and has plunged into prodigality and debt; but other

members, under the influence of religion and education, have either curbed the inclination, or in some instances have turned it into a right and generous liberality. The children of misers are not all miserly. While some will be niggards, others will show that they have learned the right use of money, and will be liberal in a good and judicious way. If there be predominating tendencies in our nature there are also a great variety of tendencies which have come down to us, all striving for the mastery, and which seem to demand some guiding and dominating faculty such as the will, even to allow full play for their development.[1]

And here perhaps we may advance a step farther and see the wonderful power of Baptism, and how it is 'a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.' Every child who is brought to the Font brings with him, if the above statements are true, a large series of hereditary moral tendencies to be worked out in his life. When he passes down into the death of Christ, and is buried in the waters of Baptism, and rises again to newness of living, he does not enter on life deprived of his characteristics either in the direction of good or evil inherited qualities. Baptism is no levelling process which starts all men on an equality from the first, to pick up for themselves fresh distinction and differences. Surely we may believe that two things take place in and by reason of Baptism: first, that a fresh power is given to the will of dealing with the large number of characteristic traits and tendencies which are marshalled under the name of nature; and farther, that the characteristics themselves are spiritualised, the very poisons being invested with a salutary power. And so accordingly we find in the lives of men two phenomena which answer to this suggested process of regeneration. We find some who are triumphing

[1] See Fr. Waggett, *Science and Conduct*, Pusey House Papers, No. 4.

over what has obviously been an hereditary taint; and further, we find those who turn what is in itself an hereditary taint into a source of positive virtue. Experience is too strong ever to allow us to think that an hereditary tendency is too powerful to be overcome. There are magnificent examples in the lives of the saints which are the common property of all men. The wild sensual nature of S. Augustine, who prayed the impious prayer that he might be made pure, but not yet, was turned into the magnificent personality of him who is venerated as one of the four great doctors of the Western Church. In Holy Writ, whatever may be the exact bearing of demoniacal possession on this question, S. Mary Magdalene is an example of a nature swept apparently by a sevenfold gust of passion, passing into the patient stedfastness of a saint. And so it is with any one who has striven against a besetting sin, an overmastering passion, against something which he has persuaded himself he cannot help, as being a wild taint in his blood—he will have found again and again what a surprising strength is given to him, if he once summon up courage to resist the tyranny of ingrained habit.

So that every baptized Christian feels that he may at least count upon this, that it is no fated necessity which causes him to submit to the dismemberment of his life, or the unchecked forays of marauding passion. He feels in his truer self that he is free, and he is free; and it is the will of His Maker that he should reign as master over the whole domain of his being, and that he should not rest until he has brought into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

And the immediate effect of Baptism is to make this dominion possible, for the effect of that Sacrament is to strengthen the will. There is the seat of judgment; there is the place where every battle is lost or won. A man who wills to sin has sinned, a man who

wills to conquer, will by the grace of God overcome. Oftentimes the struggle is a long one; it is always a fierce one, because it is a battle for independence. Even when beaten again and again, if he refuses to submit, and if he has energy to rally his forces, and seat the will once more firmly on the throne, then slowly, and by degrees, the supremacy is won, and the man reigns as a free man over a free nature. It is only the philosophy of despair which counsels otherwise, or an indolent *complaisance* which acquiesces in sin as the only course possible, and refuses to add the pain of a useless struggle to the humiliation of a foredoomed failure.

But this is not all; as we have seen, not only is the will strengthened in Holy Baptism, but the hereditary tendencies in all their complexity are spiritualised. Terrible and anxious as may be the responsibility of retaining those sleeping fires within, yet still there is a proper outlet and development for them. The electricity which kills and burns if improperly handled may yet be utilised for light and motion. It is a mistake to allow ourselves to be subdued and terrified by the machinations of Satan. After all God made us, and not we ourselves. And not only did He make us, but He regenerated us at the Font, and it was His will that we should retain these tendencies and desires which frighten and sometimes even impede us. Whatever be the history of their existence within a man, most surely his perfection lies in the right and proper treatment of them. God wills to save us as we are, and not, except in the last resort, as those who have been compelled to cut off the right foot and pluck out the right eye in the desperate struggle for salvation.

Every Christian man, while he reads over the Catechism in its clear statements as to the effect of Holy Baptism, ought to feel that it is a moral resurrec-

tion whose effect is still with him. He died then, and lived again then, and by means of it lives still. And he will feel that here is a power which will help him to resist the disintegration of sin, so that he may present his whole being to God perfect and complete, lacking nothing. For He Who created our human nature has yet more wonderfully regenerated it. And there is something more wonderful than our human birth by nature, and that is our supernatural birth by grace.

II

The doctrine and importance of Holy Communion, the other great Sacrament of the Gospel which is necessary to salvation, is here sketched in with great firmness and theological precision.

If it be said that the Church of England is less explicit about the Eucharistic Sacrifice than she is about Communion, it is certainly remarkable to notice the great prominence given in this place to this tremendous mystery. 'Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained?' is the question, and the answer is, 'For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby,' without at first one word about Communion. This great doctrine will be treated in a forthcoming volume of this series, but a short statement may be permitted here in its bearing on this Sacrament as generally 'necessary to salvation.' The Altar being on a line with the Heavenly intercession, it brings us under the perpetual power of the great pleading, and the precious Blood of sprinkling. It is the emphatic assertion of that by which prayer alone is made acceptable to God 'through Jesus Christ.' It is the means whereby we are united to the great service of Heaven. It is our burnt-offering with which we should labour to associate ourselves in complete detach-

ment and freedom from sin and absolute devotion. It is our sin-offering, speaking to us of intercession, and our need of it for ourselves, and of our duty to practise it on behalf of others. It is our peace-offering which the soul can offer when at peace with God; it is the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, which it pours out before God, by reason of 'His great glory.'

So Dr. Milligan asserts: 'The worship of the Christian Church is thus again no mere independent arrangement, provided by the goodness of God to guide us to communion with Him. It is no mere token of His love which might have been replaced by another equally precious and effective. It flows from communion with the Father through the Son as an already existing reality, and it is because it flows from that communion that it leads us to it. Hence it is that from the very beginning of her history the Church has instinctively regarded the Sacrament of Holy Communion as the central act of her worship.'[1]

But it is especially in view of our Lord's own words with regard to actual communion that the necessity and benefits of this Sacrament are insisted on. It is well known that the application to the Holy Communion of S. John vi. and of the words, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,'[2] has been denied. It is not so generally known that the Eucharistic application of this chapter was first called in question, as far as can be traced, by Cardinal Caietan in the sixteenth century, because it was used against him by the disciples of Huss as rendering of obligation the administering of the Communion in both kinds.[3] This unprimitive interpretation was largely followed afterwards, and for other

[1] Milligan, *The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord*, p. 309.
[2] S. John vi. 53.
[3] See Wilberforce, *The Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, p. 181.

reasons by Protestants, and is a current theory with them now. Other and more sober writers, as for instance the late learned Bishop of Durham, have maintained that we are not justified in giving an exclusively Eucharistic interpretation to these words, although the spiritual food of the Holy Sacrament would be included in the miraculous feeding promised by Christ to His faithful ones. The compilers of the Prayer Book would seem, however, to endorse the Eucharistic application, for the words of this chapter are manifestly referred to in connection with Communion in the long exhortation to intending communicants. 'For as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that Holy Sacrament, for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood; then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us.'[1] However this may be, no one would wish to pin down a great doctrine to the varying interpretation of a few texts. The modern destructive school of critics make great play with this mistaken idea. They bid us watch the last quotations from Germany as if the value of the Gospels fluctuated like shares in the money market, as this or that commentator professed himself unable to receive this or that text, or was pleased to speak of undoubted portions of S. Matthew's and S. Luke's writings as 'the birth-narratives' which were accepted as canonical at a certain period. The prominent truths of the Faith are provable by certain passages in the canonical scriptures which have not been tampered with even by those who have a theory to maintain, or an hypothesis to push, but they depend for their validity on the great Catholic tradition, on the Gospel before the Gospels. And even if it were possible to prove, which it is not, that S. John vi. does not refer to the Holy Eucharist at all, we should still believe that this Holy Sacrament was

[1] Book of Common Prayer, 'Holy Communion.'

generally necessary to salvation by reason of the importance which the Church has always assigned to it, and in virtue of its place in the economy of Christian life.

And this is the strength of the appeal made in the Catechism: the Holy Communion being what it is, it is impossible to believe anything else but that it is necessary to the salvation of that soul, which knows that its only hope amidst the disintegration of temptation and trouble is to live and grow by the aid of the spiritual food which Christ has provided for its strengthening and refreshment. Once more, we do not eat and drink the Body and the Blood of the Lord in accordance with the provisions of a spiritual Test Act, but we eat and drink that we may live and not die.

The careful and precise enunciation of Eucharistic truth, then, in the Catechism is especially valuable not only as showing how completely the Church of England has retained the Catholic faith and doctrine, but also as showing the intense and extraordinary value of this means of grace which, being so great, we could obviously only neglect to our soul's great harm and loss.

It is with this Holy Sacrament as with God's revelation generally; men shrink from the fulness of it, and in trying to put up with something which makes less demands on their faith have found that they at last have robbed themselves of the soundness and fulness of truth, and so have missed the foundation and motive of right Christian practice.

When our Lord Jesus Christ said of the Bread which He took in His hands at the first Eucharist, 'This is My Body,' the word 'is' was capable of being employed in three ways, either as asserting This is identical with My Body, or This represents My Body, simply having regard to the effect produced upon the receiver or spectator, or This represents My

Body, as expressing the intention of the giver to bestow a special blessing on a select body of favoured Christians.

These two last interpretations have been the resting-place of those who hesitated to take Christ at His Word.

It was easier to believe that, instead of being the conveyance of an objective spiritual gift, the Holy Sacrament was simply a bare memorial of a past historical action which Christ was ordaining to keep alive and fresh, the memory of His passion and death, in the hearts of those who would be willing to employ this means as a kindling of their desire.

Or it served at least to remove the doctrine into a region where mysteries demanded less explanation, to believe that the Sacrament was only a pledge or sign of a spiritual Presence, which God at the same time was imparting to the heart of him who received bread and wine in thankful remembrance of His death, the only connection between the Sacrament and the Grace of the Sacrament being that their reception was simultaneous. And so in this sense it might be said, without an undue strain on faith, that our Lord was virtually present in His Sacrament, retaining as far as possible the old terms, but emptying them of that which was a strain upon faith, for so the elements of the Sacrament became nothing more than an assurance of a subtle process of grace which was taking place in the soul of those who were especially the objects of God's favour.

But the Catechism was emphatic in rejecting these unworthy and inadequate conceptions of the intention of Christ, as conveyed to us in the tradition of the Church, and bade us retain the natural and historical interpretation of Christ's words, which bids us see a Sacramental identification of Christ's Body, as the inward part or thing signified, with the Sacrament which conveys His presence. And in saying this, at

the same time there is no attempt at definition or description of the mode and manner of His Presence. There is no balancing of Transubstantiation or Consubstantiation. They are not even mentioned, but the old theological distinction traceable to S. Augustine is maintained of the *Sacramentum*, *i.e.* the Bread and Wine substantially and really present; the *Res Sacramenti*, *i.e.* the 'thing signified,' which is the Body and Blood of Christ which are 'taken' as well as received—or, in the words of Article xxviii., '*given*, taken and eaten'—'by the faithful in the Lord's Supper'; and the *Virtus Sacramenti*, *i.e.* the spiritual feeding on Christ, whereby the faithful are made partakers of Christ, so that the actual gift bestowed in the Holy Communion would be the objective gift of the Body and Blood of Christ, which are present really and truly, but spiritually and ineffably, as a 'spiritual substance'[1] under the outward visible part, sign, or form of Bread and Wine.

It is on this careful and precise statement of doctrine that the Catechism is able to rest, the necessity of this Sacrament where it can be had, and also the clear enunciation of the benefits to the devout receiver.

It has been pointed out elsewhere[2] that a very great deal depends on whether we regard this Holy Sacrament as a pious memorial of occasional and infrequent use, or whether we regard it as a definite means of grace for those who wish to grow in strength and spiritual vigour; whether it is to be regarded as manna in the desert, or a victor's feast when the stress of battle is over, and the pilgrim has reached the promised land.

There can be little doubt that in the Catechism the Holy Communion is regarded as a very definite means of grace, that the Body of Christ is to the soul what

[1] Homily of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament: This, and not 'sustenance,' is undoubtedly the true reading.

[2] Author's *Religion*, p. 251.

the element of bread is to the physical life, and the Blood of Christ is to the soul what wine is to those who are refreshed by it. And we may well believe with Bishop Forbes, that those who have so presumptuously separated that which Christ Himself never pronounced to be so separated, have deprived the laity of a very special blessing. 'While the Sacrament under one kind conveys all the graces necessary to salvation, the Chalice has a special grace of its own—the grace of gladdening. If the Sacraments cause that which they signify, the species of bread and wine must signify in different ways; and that diversity will refer both to the sign, and to the mode of the signifying, and also to the thing signified. Therefore the effect of the two will not be common, but diverse. Both species together signify the plenitude of the Heavenly feast, and the perfect satisfaction of the soul which each by itself does not signify.'[1]

The Catechism, in these very pregnant and solemn sentences, would surely seem to be urging on the Christian the intense importance of the Sacramental life. Life which for him began with one Sacrament must be carried on to perfection by another; as the bread speaks of growth and the wine of joy, so he must be growing in grace until he throws off the sin which doth so easily beset him, and until Christ be formed in him, until he can say with the Apostle: 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'[2]

[1] Bishop Forbes, *Explanation of XXXIX Articles*, on Article xxx., vol. ii. p. 597.
[2] Gal. ii. 20.

CHAPTER II

THE RIGHT DISPOSITION FOR THE USE OF THE SACRAMENTS

> Neque enim litigaverunt inter se, aut quisquam eorum se alteri præposuit, Zaccæus et ille centurio, cum alter eorum gaudens in domum suam susceperit Dominum, alter dixerit, 'non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum'; ambo Salvatorem honorificantes diverso et quasi contrario modo; ambo peccatis miseri, ambo misericordiam consecuti.
>
> Contemtum solum non vult cibus iste, sicut nec manna fastidium.

The Catechism is careful to lay great stress upon a right disposition in all who approach to receive God's gifts through the Sacraments. We have already discussed the provision made in the case of Baptism for a representative protestation of repentance and faith in the person of god-parents chosen for that purpose, whose duty it is to prepare the understanding and will of the child to take up that pledge, as soon as he is old enough to understand what grace and responsibility mean, what is wrong and what is right, what to seek and what to avoid.

And this pledging of the unconscious child, in full confidence that he will take up his pledge, is a very strong witness to the need of the prepared heart, and of the co-operation of man with God even in receiving gifts which depend entirely on God's bounty. It is so,

as we have seen, in Prayer itself; however ready God may be to give, there must be the asking on the part of man, for God will not bless us without ourselves. 'Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'[1] God will not pauperise with a dole the recipients of His bounty, nor give us blessings in which we have had no conscious share. If we look at the dreadful power of hindering possessed by human nature, it will be further manifest how necessary it is that the human heart should be prepared. We are told by S. Mark, of Nazareth our Blessed Lord's 'own country,' that He 'could there do no mighty work.' And S. Matthew adds, 'because of their unbelief.[2] In the parable of the sower the good seed sown is vitiated in three cases out of four by bad soil. And indeed it is a commonplace of human moral experience.

Sincerum est nisi vas, quodcunque infundis acescit.[3]

It will be well, therefore, to consider carefully the necessary preparation to which a child is pledged from his earliest years, as often as he approaches to receive God's gifts, under veils whose very simplicity might deceive him, and whose easiness of access might breed a familiarity both delusive and dangerous.

The requirements for the reception of both these great Sacraments are substantially the same—Repentance and Faith; to which is added—in the case of that Sacrament which is to form the constant food of conscious life—love, which secures the right and proper discharge of those duties which devolve on a man as he takes his place in the world.

Indeed, it has been pointed out that the 'requirements for Holy Communion are in reality no other

[1] Quoted in service for Public Baptism of Infants.
[2] S. Mark vi. 5; S. Matt. xiii. 58.
[3] Hor. *Epist.* 1. ii. 54.

than those of the three great Christian vows—to renounce, believe, and obey—of which we were taught in the beginning of the Catechism. Progress in holiness consists not in learning things that are new, but in a more full understanding and more faithful fulfilment of the earliest lessons.'[1]

There has been a great and rapid multiplication of celebrations of the Holy Eucharist in the English Church, for which we ought to be extremely thankful. And as a consequence men and women receive this Holy Sacrament with a frequency unheard of, at least as a common thing, sixty years ago. We are far removed from those times when the Canon of the Eucharist was printed in small type in the Prayer Book, as among the most occasional of occasional services; and from that dread of receiving the Holy Sacrament, which would lead a man to believe that there was no forgiveness of sins committed after a Communion. And therefore we are living now in all the danger of multiplied privilege, lest it should be accompanied by scant devotion and meagre preparation. The solemn and salutary warnings of the Prayer Book invitation to Communion also are seldom heard. In some churches it is thrust out by the dread of anything which might lengthen the service by five minutes, although with a strange inconsistency even a longer time is expended on strings of unnecessary and incomprehensible notices. In other churches it is omitted because it contains a warning to the unworthy communicant, and all warnings, whether in the Creeds or elsewhere, are considered illiberal. In other churches the outspoken invitation to Confession renders it unpalatable, and so our congregations are invited to Communion, but never publicly warned to prepare themselves by cultivating the right disposition for the due and proper receiving of that Sacrament. And so,

[1] Robinson, *Church Catechism Explained*, pp. 152, 153.

in the service itself, there is an attempt made to minimise the penitential element. The Litany, before the High Celebration, is in most cases gone. A determined attack is made upon the penitential opening of the service. Those who are in a hurry find it long; those who disparage the Old Testament cannot conceal their contempt for the Mosaic Law; those who think that nothing can be right which is not to be found in the Roman Missal equally dislike it; and so it goes out, in that spirit of reckless eclecticism which is now casting out the Catechism itself from schools, that Nonconformists may not be offended, and cutting up the Creeds that unbelievers may not be disturbed. But those who have felt the true and deep importance of the plea made in the Catechism, for the due cultivation of repentance, faith, and love, in preparation for Communion, will feel again the distinct loss which accrues to the soul from ceasing to be reminded of God's great Law, to which he owes obedience, and as to which he is conscious of many an act of treachery, and many a faithless transgression, which forces him into the heartfelt cry, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.'

But obviously the devout communicant has no right to content himself with the public forms of penitence in which the ascent is made to the Sacramental presence of Christ, not even with the public Confession and Absolution there provided. Any one who carefully studies the Prayer Book, of which this Catechism is a part, will see that Repentance and Faith, such as are necessary to the worthy communicant, are to form a very special subject of private endeavour. 'In the meantime,' between hearing the invitation and receiving the Holy Communion, the Christian who so minds to draw near to the Altar of God, is as here exhorted to 'examine himself,' by the rule of God's commandments, and whereinsoever he shall perceive himself to

have offended, either by will, word, or deed, there to bewail his own sinfulness, and to confess himself to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life. He is also to consider carefully his actions as regards his neighbour, and if necessary to make restitution and satisfaction for all injuries done to another; and generally to repent and amend, or else not to approach that Holy Table, lest he incur the penalty which awaits the unworthy communicant. He is farther urged, that if by this ordinary self-examination and confession he cannot quiet his own conscience, but requires farther comfort or counsel, he is to seek the help of the minister of God's word, and from him receive the benefit of Absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice for the quieting of his conscience and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.[1]

Here two courses are open to the penitent, both presupposing the self-examination enjoined by the Catechism: either as the result of that self-examination to confess the sins so discovered to God immediately, or else to confess them to God before His priest. In both cases examination, sorrow for sins, confession of sins, and amendment of life are necessary. In both cases the pardon comes from God, but in the second case it becomes articulate in a human voice, and conveys a particular grace of Absolution. And here it may be necessary to assert, that the compilers of the Prayer Book did not brandish old names from which all meaning had been evacuated.

Making deductions for theories of penance, and minute regulating principles which guided practice in the mediæval Church, whatever Absolution meant then it means now; and there is no authority for saying that it merely signifies relief from ecclesiastical censure, or the proclaiming, with a good deal of circumstance, that which a child could assert equally well, that God

[1] Book of Common Prayer, 'Holy Communion.'

forgives our sins if we are penitent. Absolution has attached to it a special value, and is a particular benefit attached to a particular expression of repentance. It has been said with great truth, that 'Forgiveness is just one aspect of the truth of redemption; it is not the "sending away" of God's vengeance, or the "sending away" of man's penalty, but it is, according to the literal meaning of the words by which it is commonly described, the "sending away of sins," ἡ ἄφεσις τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν'—the real nature of God's forgiveness being not so much a sentence of indemnity for sins past as the cure of the disease of sin, and so the chief end of this forgiveness would not be 'the consolation of the penitent, but his restoration to health and service.'[1] Hence we may contend that Absolution is something more than simple forgiveness, it is forgiveness of a particular kind; as indeed the Prayer Book speaks of 'the benefit of Absolution'[2] as something to be obtained in a special manner for a distinct purpose, differing perhaps from ordinary forgiveness in the same way as Sacramental means of grace differ from the more ordinary means of grace.

It may be said, a man cannot be more than forgiven if he seeks for pardon. But surely it would be true to say that he can be forgiven, and receive in addition a special grace for the renewal of his life shattered by sin. It is the difference, as is pointed out in the book on *Confession* by Canon Carter, mentioned in the previous note, between the action of the Jewish priest who declared the leper clean, and the action of the disciples of the Lord who loosed Lazarus from his bands and let him go.

As regards practice, one thing would seem to be quite clear, that the Church requires confession from every one as a prerequisite to a devout Communion.

[1] *Church Quarterly*, January 1903, 'Confession and Absolution.'
[2] See *Confession*, by Canon Carter, p. 254.

In view of the declarations of Holy Scripture nothing short of this could be maintained: and this confession must be a confession not of sinfulness but of sins, according to the directions quoted above from the exhortation in the Communion Service.

But this confession, as already has been stated, may be made either to God alone immediately in the secrecy of the penitent's own chamber, or to God mediately with the help of His priest. In the first case it is evidently regarded as a serious and complete matter, carrying with it restitution to an offended neighbour and the like, and being blessed with the full assurance of God's pardon. In the second case the priest is empowered to confer a Sacramental blessing known as the benefit of Absolution, after a complete opening of his grief on the part of the penitent, who obtains all that the penitent in the first case obtained, together with a special grace conveyed to him in Absolution.

It would seem in this latter case that confession was a necessary prerequisite to Absolution: and that examples which have been supposed of grave and incapacitating sickness, or of partial dumbness, would be cases not for Absolution proper, but for something analogous to spiritual Communion and of equal benefit to the receiver, while it does not involve such a serious responsibility on the part of the priest, in remitting sins of which he has no cognisance.

It would seem, further, that a complete enumeration of sins, as far as that is possible, would be necessary, and not a selected few, the penitent being scarcely the best judge of the heinousness of his own sins, and having no right further to assert that there is any unrighteousness which is not sin, and does not need confessing. If the penitent feels that these sins are already forgiven, and do not need to be included in this Absolution, we may remember once more, in the words of Canon Carter, that it does not follow, that

'even although through the force of contrition the forgiveness of sins has been obtained before Absolution be given, that therefore the Absolution is vain. God will surely honour His own ordinances, if used in dependence upon His promises, and the sealing of His gifts by a sacramental ministry is part of the divine purpose. . . . The Absolution may be a continuance, or an increase of the grace already bestowed; it may still be necessary for the abiding effect of the spiritual healing.'[1]

It may be allowed that the words of the exhortation alluded to, and the terms of the rubric in the visitation of the sick, may be pressed in the direction of a confession of such sins only as seem to the penitent to be burdensome, but, on the other hand, the ordinary practice and the extreme danger of self-deceit ought to be decisive against it.

It may be said then, that in view of a devout preparation for the Holy Eucharist a confession of sins is contemplated by the Church, as necessary for all, while Absolution is the privilege of some.

Here occurs at once the difficulty as to what relation the Absolutions in the Divine office and in the Communion Service bear towards the forgiveness of sins discussed above. Are the Absolutions in the Prayer Book real Absolutions or not, and if they are, why should not the penitent be content with these? The author has expressed his views on that subject elsewhere, to which in order to avoid repetition the reader is referred.[1] It may be sufficient to say here, that the Absolutions in the offices of the Church are real Absolutions, but Absolutions pronounced over men already forgiven after an earnest penitence, for the purposes of the service in which they are engaged. They are the cleansing laver set before the sanctuary in which those who are about

[1] See *Confession*, by Canon Carter, p. 253.
[2] *Priestly Ideals*, p. 68 and following.

to offer the service may wash. They are comparable to that merciful action of the Lord, Who washed the feet of those who, being already washed, needed not save to wash their feet.[1] They are general Absolutions designed to cover a general disabling sinfulness generally confessed, and have existed and do exist in the service books of the rest of the Western Church, where private confession is of obligation.

It may be possible, where Absolution cannot otherwise be had, that a penitent may so deepen his contrition that he may obtain a fulness of Sacramental blessing in the public confessions and Absolutions; but this would not be their normal nor designed use, the general scheme of penitence being as has been stated above.

Further questions may be raised, as to who are the persons qualified to receive special Absolution in its narrower sense, and whether there are any who can obtain forgiveness in no other way.

To answer the second question first, it might be said that there would certainly appear to be nothing in our formularies which would justify any one in saying that there is no forgiveness for certain deadly sins, or for any deadly sin, except by Absolution. It is well to remember also that it is doubtful whether in the primitive Church reconciliation was originally given after such sins as adultery and apostasy. It would be curious if it should be generally asserted that there was no forgiveness for this kind of sins except through that which is the direct heir and survivor of the public discipline. Apart from this, there will always be a tendency in human nature to regard Absolution as a complete, easy, and short means of restoration even after the most deadly sin. It may be that this is the fact, but it is quite possible that the long struggle and wrestling with God, which belong to the man who seeks

[1] S. John xiii. 10.

God's forgiveness through simple contrition, may be even more efficacious as a matter of discipline than the hastily won Absolution. No one would venture to say a word to minimise the importance of Absolution for deadly sin. It would seem to be only right and proper, that the remedy should be won by the contrition which takes shape in a humiliating confession. And further, there would seem to be some sins which can only be healed by the power of Absolution. But things being as they are, it would not seem to be right to tie down forgiveness of deadly sin to formal Absolution.

As to the first question suggested, as to who and what sort of persons are qualified to receive formal Absolution, it would seem sufficient to say that the Church of England leaves this point entirely to the discretion of the penitent. It is for him to decide whether he will seek such Absolution or not. And it would be difficult to repel a person on the grounds that presumably he was living in a normal condition of pardon, and therefore did not need it.

And this for two reasons: if mortal sin be in its essence a sin in grave matters forbidden under grave obligation, if it be rooted and grounded in deliberate aversion from God, still what is known as venial sin, namely a giving way to wrong without any such conscious aversion from God, may in a given case, and in matters which do not appear in themselves grave, very easily pass into that aversion from God which produces moral death.

'Our soul loatheth this light bread,'[1] in its modern equivalent of laxity at prayer and Communion, may rank in the sight of God with the uncleanness and murders of a rougher class of sinner, whose opportunities have been less, and who have done less despite to the Spirit of grace. But apart from this distinction of mortal and venial sin, a plea may be raised for

[1] Numb. xxi. 5.

Absolution—*i.e.* for the comfort of Absolution, not in its sense of consolation, but in its old sense of strengthening—for those who are living in a normal condition of pardon, but who at the same time, having reached a higher plane of life, become obnoxious to a new set of faults and offences, of which they who are living in a non-normal condition of occasional pardon are hardly conscious.

There is the real disgrace and pain which come upon a courtier who has been guilty of a breach of *etiquette*. Would he not feel the disgrace of having failed in his courtly duties, or of having offended in the code which governs the actions of society, as keenly as an ordinary man feels the weight of some serious misdemeanour or even crime?

Let us take the case of the scholar, again, in the society of critics, or even in the sense of abstract fitness which governs his work. Would he not be pained and burdened by an offence against scholarship? Or would not a musician be pained and hurt by an offence against music, or an artist by a departure from the higher laws of art?

Living on a higher level of excellence, such men become obnoxious to fresh laws of right and harmony, the breach of which is a serious offence, and productive of a real sense of failure and unworthiness.

Is there not, then, such a thing as the scholarship of holiness? Is there not a sense of defilement and a real cause for sorrow in a failure to attain to a knowledge of 'the manner of the god of the land,'[1] in a breach of those laws which govern the Communion of Saints?

To those who call to mind S. Peter's sense of humiliation in the presence of the miraculous power of Christ,[2] or S. John's self-abasement in the consciousness of Christ's majesty,[3] it will not be hard to realise that Absolution to the saint is as real and as necessary as

[1] 2 Kings xvii. 26. [2] S. Luke v. 8. [3] Rev. i. 17.

was the cleansing fire to Isaiah, when he felt his own impurity of life, made acute by contrast in the divine presence and the worship of the celestial choir.[1]

Absolution may seem to be too great a thing to leave to the discretion of the penitent, yet so it is, and the history of repentance done to order often seems but the formal grief of the ordered minstrels making a noise, when what we need for the dead soul is the hand and voice of Jesus, which lifts up with an action and word of power, 'I say unto thee, Arise.'[2]

But a second requisite of equal importance with a true repentance is a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ. It is possible to push too far the weary impatience of controversy such as that which possessed Hooker when he said, '"This is My Body" and "This is My Blood" being words of promise, sith we all agree that by the sacrament Christ doth really and truly in us perform His promise, why do we vainly trouble ourselves with so fierce contentions whether by consubstantiation, or else by transubstantiation the sacrament itself be first possessed with Christ or no? A thing which no way can either further or hinder us howsoever it stand, because our participation of Christ in this sacrament dependeth on the co-operation of His omnipotent power which maketh it His Body and Blood to us, whether with change or without alteration of the element, such as they imagine we need not greatly to care or inquire.'[3] Surely the very fierceness of the controversy and the stress laid on the right apprehension of Eucharistic doctrine are in themselves indications that it is of great importance that we should think and speak aright of this mystery. And a right faith in the Holy Sacrament has often seemed to be a help to a right faith in respect of the Incarnation itself. It is only when orthodoxy takes

[1] Is. vi. 5. [2] S. Luke vii. 14.
[3] Hooker's Works, vol. ii.; *Eccl. Pol.* book v. p. lxvii. 6.

the place of love, and when people are more ready to dispute than to receive, that a reverent inquiry into the truth of that which the Church teaches and holds becomes barren and deceptive.

It cannot fail, for instance, to influence our earnestness in approaching, whether we believe that we are drawing near to a special manifestation of Christ, comparable to the presence of God on the Mercy Seat, and an extension of His manifestation in the flesh in the Incarnation, or whether we are simply assisting at a religious drama elevating and inspiring, but in no way associated with a special presence of Christ. Low views of the Sacramental mystery have certainly an adverse influence on preparation for that Sacrament, as witness the rise of the uncatholic practice of Evening Communion, not only in defiance of the long-prescribed fast before Communion, but also resulting in this, that the Holy Communion is driven off to the end of the day, not a day spent in fasting and devotion as in the recorded cases of Afternoon Communion on fast days in the primitive church,[1] but a day with its usual intercourse, meals, and distractions, when the first-fruits of our energies can no longer be offered, but only the jaded residuum of spiritual devotion and pious effort. It cannot be without its effect on our conduct also, even if the preparation is the same, whether we regard the elements as simple bread and wine or whether in regard to the inward part, of which the Catechism speaks, we feel entitled to 'worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker,' in accordance with the words of a famous declaration submitted to the then Archbishop of Canterbury in 1867, signed by twenty-one priests, while 'we repudiate all "adoration" of the "Sacramental Bread and Wine," which would be idolatry; regarding them with the reverence due to them because of their Sacramental relation to the Body

[1] Puller, *Concerning the Fast before Communion*, p. 17.

and Blood of our Lord . . . we believe that Christ Himself, really and truly, but Spiritually and ineffably, present in the Sacrament, is therein to be adored.'

But a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ would also most powerfully affect our attitude and disposition towards the Holy Sacrament as part and parcel of our inner spiritual life. We need more purpose in our communions, to feel that they are not things which can lightly be taken up or let alone, not to be enterprised or omitted as the whim takes us. Lacordaire's extreme statement has an element of truth in it: 'It is impossible to estimate the effect of one communion less in the life of a Christian.' The frequent communicant must not endure a state of spiritual stagnation. He, if any one, must know what it is to grow in grace. A life in which the besetting sin is hardly held in check is not a Eucharistic life. A life which exhibits no supernatural fruit, no extraordinary gifts, can hardly be answering to God's mercy through Christ in this Holy Sacrament. So that a sense of God's condescending love would certainly indicate the necessity of regularity, eager desire, and earnest preparation on our part, and an effort to weave this Heavenly food into the very texture of our lives.

It is interesting to see how the Church strives to do this for us, and impresses on us the greatness of the gift which we have in our midst as the precious fruit of Christ's atoning death. The week begins with this solemn feast, a Sunday without its Eucharist is an anomaly unknown to the primitive ages of faith. To many the privilege is vouchsafed of beginning not each week only, but each day, in the same manner. True, our daily Eucharists are offered on the field of battle. In them Christ stands between us and our enemies as a refuge from the storm and a covert from the tempest, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. In them He shows us the value of single days,

and the treasure which has to be won by patient struggle out of our daily experience. Happy is the man who can so work together with Christ, without lapsing into formalism, or losing the fervour of his first faith, or falling asleep on the Mount of Transfiguration by reason of the abundance of the revelation vouchsafed unto him.

Also, on three occasions at least in our domestic life, the Holy Eucharist is woven into our inmost actions, to consecrate the solemnisation of Holy Matrimony, to sanctify the burial of the dead, and to prepare the sick soul for its last journey. It is much to be regretted that it has been left to private devotion to supply in the two first instances that which is the crown and beauty of each service.

Even now, largely owing to late hours and modern laxity, the nuptial Eucharist, if celebrated at all, is separated from the actual marriage-rite. And that, whose memory strangely enough lasted on only in the wedding breakfast after the fast before the nuptial communion, is either omitted or placed at an earlier hour.

Still this was and is the mind of the Church, to invite Christ as He was invited of old at Cana to the marriage-feast. And it would surely be less easy to forget the sacredness of the marriage-tie which Christ Himself had bound upon the newly married pair, and the iniquity of the divorce court would slink away like a guilty thing ashamed from those whose union had been sprinkled with the sacrificial blood of the Eucharist.

And at the solemn hour of committing to the grave the body of one who has died in the faith of Christ, and rests in the sleep of peace, no comfort can compare with the pleading of that great sacrifice, not for the dead but for the living departed, for him who is gone before his Maker and his Judge, his probation ended

and eternity before him. While to those who remain with torn affections and aching heart, striving with difficulty to learn their stern lesson of detachment, as one more link is severed which binds them to earth, there lies before them this golden cord of attachment in Christ. In Him there is no separation, in Him we are all made one, who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

O mystic fellowship divine,
Bound by the one prevailing sign!
The Altar spans death's icy tide,
The dead seem kneeling at our side.
Angels adore the Eternal Son,
Earth, Heaven, and Spirit-sphere are one.
A power more strong than death is here,
A mystery which makes all clear:
Now Faith can those cold hands embrace
Which from their quiet resting-place
The chalice of the Lord pass on.
Love lives although the loved are gone.

So when the sick man lies upon his bed, and can no longer go up into the house of the Lord, Christ comes to him to tell him that the same love follows him that waited of old upon Lazarus, or the sick slave, or the daughter of Jairus; that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth; that sickness in itself is a sacrament charged with blessing, and that faith in God's mercy will enrich even the most sombre scenes and span with the rainbow the driving storm which seemed for the moment to shut out the light of God's presence.

And Love must on no account be forgotten as predisposing the devout communicant to a worthy reception of the Holy Communion.

There is a sad irony about the fact that round the Sacrament of love have gathered some of the fiercest conflicts that have disgraced Christianity. Nowhere, perhaps, has there been such a long and continuous

display of the *odium theologicum* as in the definitions and counter definitions which men have hurled at each other in endeavouring to answer the old question which echoes round the door of all mysteries, 'How can this be?'

We may well be thankful that as members of the Church of England we stand pledged to no explanatory definition, while we hold the Catholic Faith of the reality of the Eucharistic Presence. But it seems impossible to escape the bitterness which lingers on in spite of explanations, disavowals, protests, and declarations of Faith. This last generation has witnessed the especial degradation of brawling in church, of the payment of hired spies, of violence and imprisonment, of coarse and envenomed attacks, of embittered letters in the Public Press, and all the modern equivalents for the fires of Smithfield. Men seem to learn nothing and forget nothing in the miserable controversial warfare, which is never so pitiable as when it invades the sacred precincts of the Altar, and attempts to defend the greatest exhibition of God's love by the saddest manifestation of the malignity of human passion.

But one glance at the rubrics which stand in the forefront of the Communion Service, coupled with statements in the exhortation to intending communicants quoted above, shows also the great stress that is laid by the Church on the peculiarly damaging nature of all those sins which violate the law of love. Enmity between neighbours is looked upon as in itself a disability in those intending to receive the Holy Sacrament which must be brought under ecclesiastical discipline. Malice or envy are mentioned in the exhortation in conjunction with blasphemy, adultery, and grievous crime. It is well that greater stress should be laid on this in an age of Society Newspapers, where gossip and scandal are in some cases almost the staple of conversation, and where a man's character

may be sacrificed, even in disregard of truth, if it does something to amuse a social gathering, or even to furnish a paragraph which serves to advertise a journal.

Defamation of character in the name of religion is rife. Rivalry and jealousy stop at nothing in pursuit of self-aggrandisement. We need daily more and more to study our Lord's warning, 'If thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the Altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.'[1] And it must be remembered that love is no negative refusal to hate, no mere avoidance of controversial bitterness or social defamation. A man may shrink from such things for various reasons, if it be only from the desire to lead a quiet life. Love is an active, positive virtue, which is ever seeking to extend and spread abroad the power and the claims of Christ. Love sees in the unloving exhibition of petty spite, in the fanatical utterances of the controversialists, so many signs of misplaced energy and misguided power running to waste. And just as S. Barnabas brought Saul to the Apostles and set going in the paths of usefulness those powers which had been losing themselves in controversial bitterness, so it seeks to see what is good and to elicit it, and set it free to work for God even in those who seem only to be hinderers and slanderers of His word, and to be the exponents of doctrines to be abhorred of all faithful Christians.

Love not only refuses to rejoice in the iniquity of others because such rejoicing is evil, but also because every man who suffers himself to be tied and bound by sin is a man lost to progress and to God. And if once we realised the strength of the forces which beleaguer Sion, we could no more rejoice in a neighbour's fall than an attenuated garrison could rejoice in the death

[1] S. Matt. v. 23, 24.

of one, perhaps personally distasteful, who was holding a post against the enemy and whose death meant a blow to the cause.

If the motto inscribed above the altar is, 'God so loved the world,'[1] surely the legend inscribed above the porch is this, 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.'[2]

So it is found once more to be true that the highest development of personal excellence is with the end and object of making us more worthy to take our place in the scheme of God's creation. The things which seem most bound up in our own personality, our birth into the world, our new birth into the Church, our renunciation of evil, our belief in good, our faithful performance of the law of God, our Prayers, our Sacraments, all have their manward as well as their Godward side. A good man is a better citizen than a bad man is. One who prays is contributing his spiritual donation to the community, and conferring upon them that which they have a right to expect from him. One who believes in God is a moral strength to his immediate neighbourhood. An evil liver is as one who owns an insanitary house, which is a centre of infection and disease to all around him. So Tertullian of old was able to plead: 'Moreover ye put down by force those who know how to ask it' (*i.e.* health for the Emperor), 'and, in that they know how to ask it, are able also to obtain it. For we pray for the health of the Emperors to the eternal God, the true God, the living God, Whom even the Emperors themselves would rather have propitious to them than all the rest. . . . This do, ye worthy rulers, tear from us that breath which is praying to God for your Emperor. Here will be the crime, where is truth and devotion to God.'[3] That is to say, the

[1] S. John iii. 16. [2] S. John xiii. 35.
[3] Tertullian, *Apolog.* ch. xxix. xxx.

Christians were able to appeal to the world for protection as a power not to be put down, by reason of their right of access to the throne of God. We have been reminded also in a remarkable book, that 'Economically the saintly group of qualities is indispensable to the world's welfare. The great Saints are immediate successes, the smaller ones are at least heralds and harbingers, and they may be leavens also of a better mundane order.'[1] Certainly we shall not have learned our old Catechism in vain if we are able to bring to its plain statements of the great truths of Christianity the verification of our own experience. And we shall find that this stands forth as a prominent truth of that experience, that the way to do our duty towards our neighbour is first to do our duty towards God, and hence that our duty towards God is the best way to fulfil our duty towards our neighbour, or in the mysterious words uttered by our great High Priest, 'For their sakes I sanctify Myself.'[2]

[1] Professor W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 377.
[2] S. John xvii. 19.

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